TALES FROM THE 7,000 ISLES

Dianne de Las Casas and Zarah C. Gagatiga

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TALES FROM THE 7,000 ISLES

FILIPINO FOLK STORIES

DIANNE DE LAS CASAS AND ZARAH C. GAGATIGA

World Folklore Series

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To Zarah Gagatiga,
the heart of this book—
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Auntie Jovie, Auntie Espie, Auntie Mary Ann, Kuya Boy,
and my family in the Philippines,
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In loving memory of José and Josefina Sena, my Lolo and Lola,
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—Dianne de Las Casas

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—Zarah C. Gagatiga

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INTRODUCTION: REIMAGINING THE MYTH AND MEMORY OF OUR COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

In this compendium of more than 50 folk stories, recipes, games, crafts, and photographs, one is compelled to ask, Why create another volume of ancient Philippine folklore when there are many available, both in the familiar Filipino vernacular and in cosmopolitan English?

In the past, Filipino children learned many of these tales in school textbooks. The stories were often difficult for students to understand and enjoy because they were urged to memorize the tales and recite the story's moral. While many of the tales in this collection contain an inherent moral, they are meant to be cherished for what they truly are: stories concocted and collectively reimagined by a community. They are meant to be passed from one person to another. Like rumors, the stories evolve, and, in time, the details change until an entirely different variant of the story emerges. In this kind of literature, there is no claim of sole ownership, for each story is partly owned by its storyteller and its receiver. It is important for future generations to appreciate the creative design behind the tales: the mystery, the mirth, and the metaphor that comes with each retelling.

Unfortunately, some of these stories have been inadvertently overlooked, partly because of our penchant for modernization and partly because of the inaccessibility of some of these narratives. They have either died with a storyteller unwilling or too old and forgetful to share it or been relegated to the library archives: in pages of archaic books and inside silverfish-eaten dissertations of eclectic folklorists and academic researchers. It is unfortunate since folklore is the soul of the common people of long ago who were reared not in classrooms but in the fields and forests of their surroundings. They learned not through books and writing but through the wisdom of hard labor and discovery of the universe around them.

Still, there is a larger audience: the global Filipino audience. This group includes Filipinos who work abroad, children of Filipino nationals, immigrants, and expatriates. They yearn to know more about their heritage and the country that appears on the map as a mere speckle of dots in the midst of a vast ocean. There are also, thanks to a growing number of enlightened teachers and librarians, more young readers who seek these tales as they fashion their Filipino identities. Then there are those who realize that the Philippines is a country made colorful by cultures of different languages and traits, rich with stories to tell, and an immense and often untapped wellspring of cultural assets that thousands of years have shaped.

One major aspect of the richness of Philippine culture and traditions is its imperfect geography and position in the world. A cluster of more than 7,000 islands scattered in an area between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, the Philippines is like a big cauldron that fell from the sky and shattered into

pieces, each containing a unique culture, history, and sensibility. Its archipelagic features make it penetrable and accessible on all sides and result in the ever-changing nature of its people.

Even before the Spaniards and the Americans occupied the country, in times when global politics dictated exploitive annexation as proof of invincibility, the land had already been invaded by some of the very first human species through land bridges during the glacial age. Tribes came from China, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Thailand. These first human groups, who lived in caves, like those in Tabon on the island of Palawan, brought their oral stories, poems, songs, and prayers. The story of "The Celestial Maiden" or "Star Maiden," said to have originated from central Asia, may have been spread by nomadic tribes from Alaska, China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia through the land bridges that once connected continental Asia to its archipelagic siblings alongside the Pacific Ocean. The multiple versions of this folk story and others like it indicate that it is some of the oldest literature in the country. The stories were here even before Christ was born.

The Philippines' vulnerable geography has also contributed to the ambiguous features of the Southeast Asian Filipino face due, in part, to intermarriages with other impermanent heterogeneous societies. The Filipino is neither purely Oriental nor Pacific Islander. He or she can have the best features of both races. The natural inclination to intermarry with other races is evident in every Filipino face, whose features include a natural slant in the eyelids, an aquiline nose, a pair of thick lips, curly or straight black hair, and a complexion that is neither completely white, yellow, brown, or ebony. This impermanent nature is also translated into the culture, in terms of the literature and traditions brought by the intermarrying of the Filipino with the foreigner.

Many animistic legends that involve female protagonists were later retold with names that were not indigenous to the Filipino. Rather, they were names associated with the Spanish Catholics, who christened Filipinos with biblical names. For example, the various Marias (Mariang Makiling, Mariang Sinukuan, Maria Cacao, Mariang Isda, Mariang Alimango, and so on) are all named after a Jewish woman named Marian or Mary, the supreme female icon of the Church of Rome. This embrace of female iconology was probably first impressed by the Chinese and the Japanese where monotheistic Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism freely associated with the polytheistic beliefs of the communities of early East Asians. The Indians who settled in the Philippines were known for their devotion to the *shakti*, or the female aspects of their male gods. Finally, this ideology was permanently sealed into the Filipino psyche by the Spaniards and their devotion to the Virgin Mother of God.

The unpredictable landscape of the Philippines also gave rise to the formation of different ethnic groups and races, each influenced by the topography. Island dwellers from as far as Batanes in the north and Sulu and Tawi-tawi down south are shaped by the powerful waters that surround their domains, but each have unique traits that have developed through the many years of exposure to this invaluable source of life and livelihood. The Ivatans of the North developed a sturdy and tightly knit society and a pacifist disposition due to the isolating effects of typhoons on their territory. On the other hand, the Tausugs, Samals, and Yakans of the south have a high degree of combativeness and a deep-seated conviction in terms of loyalty and protectiveness to family and Islamic faith, which can be attributed to the history of pirate raids that beset the islands, their location being one of the favored routes.

The highland peoples of the Cordillera mountain range in Northern Luzon—the Ifugao, Kalinga, Bontoc (Igorot), Gaddang, Ilongot, Isneg, and the Tingguian—have developed a culture and lifestyle that is largely uninfluenced by foreign elements because of the difficult accessibility of

their geographic position. More than 300 years of Spanish occupation has not relatively dismantled the way of life of these peoples. In fact, these pre-Hispanic groups have developed complex societies based on highly evolved religious systems and strong communal traditions.

The Ifugaos, for example, view the world as composed of many dimensions, the heavens and the earth being just some of them. The deities they adore (which are almost entirely shared or have a variant of, for every race) are also the heroes in their folklore and epic literature. Their system of laws and punishments is best explained through stories or chants, often heard and memorialized during community gatherings. These instances of community bonding through the recitation of oral literature can be seen in preparations for a dead family member's journey to the next world, the start of the planting season, the settlement of grievances either through clan wars or marriages, or the altruistic community spirit (lovingly known in Philippine vocabulary as *bayanihan*, literally "making heroes of everyone") through building houses or the wood hunting that comes with the making of the *kadangyan,* or nobleman's long bench. This is a symbol not only of luxury and high stature in society but also of the community's involvement in its creation.

The tropical climate and environment of the country has also influenced the way the Filipinos relate to nature and the universe. Heavenly objects like the sun, moon, stars, clouds, rain, thunder and lightning, and other forces of nature establish an inexplicable but naturally acceptable order in the scheme of life for Filipinos. The sun provides warmth and precipitates the growth of crops and plants. The moon's movement and gravitational pull affects the movement of animals that are often hunted or domesticated for food. The constellations of stars provide direction on a dark night. Clouds and rain sustain the presence of the important element of water through weather cycles that dictate the seasons. Thunder and lightning are reminders of the effect of these phenomena on the changing landscape of sky and earth.

The flora, fauna, and marina of the country sustain the survival and continuation of these people and are therefore considered sacred and essential symbols in their lives. They justify the purpose of their existence through the configuration of fantastic plots that involve supernatural beings like gods and giants and animals and plants are given anthropomorphic human traits.

Bodies of water and land formations are given significance through the creation of myths that explain the particular designs that define these places. The evolution of landforms, like mountains and volcanoes (the Philippines being part of the Circle of Fire or Volcano Belt), are best explained not through the detailed description of their geological formations but through the conception of stories that explain or justify the phenomena of eruptions, earthquakes, typhoons, and other natural calamities.

Religion and belief systems are integral to the life of the Filipino who is shaped by his definition of the universe and the forces that control his birth, death, and even rebirth. Pre-Hispanic Filipinos were originally polytheistic, believing in pantheons of gods and goddesses that controlled the natural laws and minor deities and spirits that took care of the affairs of household and family life. These creatures were both revered and feared, and their omnipresence had a major effect on the morality and politics of tribe or community members. Their favor or dismay by the gods had dramatic if not long-lasting repercussion on the lives of people. These beliefs are still present in today's tribal communities.

Filipinos also have a systemic inclination to ancestor worship. The dead are considered a part of their lives, either as guides or counsel to the living or as protectors from malignant elements or

forces. The presence of creatures like the *aswang*, *kapre*, *tikbalang*, *lambana*, and *anito* or humans endowed with preternatural powers like the *manggagaway*, the *babaylan*, and the *mangkukulam* provides a valid reason for their existence in the Filipino imagination. They keep the actions of people in check, and transgressors of laws, both natural and spiritual, are often killed by these creatures or turned into one of them.

This innate polytheistic tendency is further continued, albeit discreetly, even with the introduction of Islam by the Arab and Malay seafarers, the Roman Catholic religion by the Spaniards, and Protestant Christianity by the Americans. Christianity and Islam, being a centralized form of monotheism, essentially discourages and even punishes the veneration of other religious figures. They insist on the ultimate surrender of faith to a vague, often impenetrable and unchangeable universal force that is defined in human terms as God the Father (to Christians) or Allah (to Muslims). Despite this deep hold on the Filipino's spiritual life, animistic or polytheistic activities have insidiously permeated the monotheistic belief systems of lowland Filipinos through woman, or *shakti*, veneration. This is evidenced in rituals, prayers, and celebrations that glorify the Virgin Mary and all her various representations (Our Lady of Good Voyage, Perpetual Help, Remedies, and so on or Immaculate Conception, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, and so on). The Catholic Church, in fact, implicitly encouraged and institutionalized polytheism through hagiography, or the worship of saints, and the Philippines has ultimately benefited culturally from this. Jesus Christ is popularly worshipped either as the Black Nazarene or as the infant/juvenile form, Santo Niño, through the crowded processions in Quiapo or in the Ati-atihan and Sinulog Festivals in Aklan and Cebu, respectively. Many of the towns are dedicated to at least one Catholic saint or representation of Jesus and Mary. Two tales in this book recount the miracles that saints have demonstrated in the lives of religious Filipinos.

At the same time, Filipinos have cautious regard for creatures in lower mythology. In fact, Philippine lower mythology is rich in characters that have both fascinated and frightened generations of Filipinos through the centuries. Their presence and impact on the Filipino is so strong that many believe and profess to have seen or interacted with these creatures. The rise of the term "urban legends" in the Filipino context may refer to the stories of a singular or collective contact with a creature of lower mythology. Some of the more well-known elemental beings are *duwende* (dwarf), *sirena* (mermaid, whose lower body is that of a fish, often seen as enchanting fishermen), *siyokoy* (merman, whose head is that of a fish and the rest resembling a human's but covered with scales), *kapre* (an ash-covered giant who smokes a cigar and dwells on tops of trees), *tiyanak* (an imp that disguises itself as an infant in swaddling clothes), *tikbalang* (a centaurlike creature capable of malignant behavior), *aswang* (ghouls or demonic creatures that assume the shape of animals and attack people for their heart, liver, or innards), and *manananggal* (a winged creature, often with a human form during daytime, who splits her body into two, with the lower limbs left behind in a secret place). Paranormal characters like the *mangkukulam* or *mambabarang* (sorcerer or shaman) can be classified as humans who learn and use magic in the daily course of their lives and are often essential members of the community who cure the sick or drive away bad spirits or elementals from an injured or possessed person.

Many Filipinos believe that there are also those who practice dark magic and those who accept payment to curse, hex, or possess a potential victim through their client's access to the victim's photographs, piece of clothing, or even a strand of hair. A more benign variant is called the *albularyo* or

herbolario (literally, an "herb doctor"). He does not have special powers but uses a variety of means to heal, including using local indigenous medicine combined with prayer or incantations and sometimes a dance or a ritualistic *sapi* (possession) by divine beings like the Santo Niño or *duwende*. Ghosts or phantoms include the "white lady" dressed in diaphanous white fabric who unwittingly scares victims riding cars in suspected haunted areas. Western-inspired creatures also include the *bampira* (vampire) or *pugot* (headless zombie). The strange attraction of Filipinos to both indigenous and derived gothic creatures can be seen in the presence of modern-day television shows that feature them and is slowly piquing interest among the young through books and films.

The entry of Islam, as introduced by Arab missionaries and Islamic chieftains in the lives of the early Filipinos in Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi, has not diminished the polytheistic and animistic elements that define the culture and traditions of the ethnic groups that live there. Through trading and religious missions, Islam found its way in Sulu, Mindanao, and in kingdoms in Visayas and Luzon. The agents of Islam who brought religious and political influences in the islands led to the establishments of sultanates not only in Mindanao but also in Visayas and Luzon, particularly Manila and Tondo. When Spaniards arrived in the 1500s, they were surprised by the strong and fierce presence of Islam in the political communities in the islands.

Although Islam discouraged idolatry, the text of the Quran did not erase the memory of many forms of folklore among the ethnic groups there. It actually indirectly encouraged hero worship among Muslims, especially in relation to their resistance to the invasion of the Spaniards in the areas of Lanao, Maguindanao, and Cotabato. Hence, many of the fictional *datu* and sultan characters have been given a special place in the evolution of folklore in those areas.

In more recent times, the presence of Chinese and Indian communities and their eventual integration to Filipino society and way of life have also contributed to the cultural identity of the Filipino. He is no longer just Southeast Asian, neither Christian nor Muslim; he is partly or ethnically Chinese or Indian. Although marginalized during the Spanish occupation, the Chinese have established a strong presence not just because of their predilection for industry and trade (which has become an integral part of Philippine economics and politics) but also because of the slow but lasting integration of their cultural and religious beliefs into the lives of their brown-skinned or mestizo neighbors. Taoism, Buddhism, and local Chinese folklore have resonances in many Philippine folktales and myths. This can be partly accredited to the consistent interaction of the Filipinos with the Chinese and the Filipinos' innate fascination for cultures that are entirely unfamiliar to them. The anthropomorphic animals and trees and the mythic function of teaching moral messages is proof of the shared qualities in both Chinese and Filipino folklore. Even in modern times, expect the Filipino to celebrate New Year, both the Christian and the Chinese dates, by practicing Buddhist and Taoist rites and traditions and even learning feng shui or Chinese geomancy and numerology. The Chinese have anchored their beliefs on the universal forces of nature, and many Filipinos have adopted this cultural belief.

Indians, though essentially belonging to a homogeneous community, are not invasive or intrusive of other people's cultures and beliefs. This is largely due to the multicultural nature of their mother country. Nevertheless, Indian folklore and the Hindu religion have a major influence on some of the oral literatures of certain regions in the Philippines. The motif of the Naga, or river-serpent god, is recognizable in many folktales in Visayas, Mindanao, and Bikol. In fact, the city of Naga in Camarines Sur and the municipality of Naga in Cebu are named after it. The Bikolano

penchant for eating hot, spicy food can be attributed to the introduction and cultivation of chili, turmeric, and other spices by the Indian communities that lived there for hundreds of years.

The culture and nature of the Filipinos is ultimately shaped by the words and wisdom of their ancestors. These stories, whether we call them folktales, myths, or legends, are, according to Philippine children's literature scholar and critic Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz, "prose narratives which tell of the beginnings of natural phenomena and the origin of the world, humankind and death. They are believed to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past, (and) they mirror the truth of human experience rather than that of history." In fact, these stories are created even as part of the design of the early Filipinos' religious beliefs, often told by a wise and trustworthy person such as a *babaylan* (priestess or shaman) or a *cantero* (chanters), who embellish it as part of rituals meant to remember the dead, to glorify a deity for a generous harvest, to send off fishermen as they brave the seas, to bless warriors as they avenge their fallen comrades, or to simply gather the family together in a moment of thanksgiving. This makes them sacred and veritable proof of a community that lives their human ways and, at the same time, connects with the divinity around them. Filipinos imagine the divine not as invisible spirits, an entirely Western concept, but as part of the architecture of nature, both physical and ethereal. It is strange for westerners to discover that most Filipinos confess to having spoken with the spirits of their deceased loved ones or having seen godly apparitions on the walls of their houses, on rose petals and palm fronds, or through the tears on the images of wooden saints in their houses.

With thousands of stories both told and retold by different writers of varying degrees of creativity and fluency, we have selected some that we think would be fresh when told to both old and new audiences. These stories are not necessarily original and exclusive to a certain cultural group, but we try to retell these stories in a language that we think is universal through simple but certainly not prosaic narration. We have also selected stories that we consider unique as their places of origin. The stories enchant us with wit, humor, or romance recognizable not only to the locals who are familiar with them but also to a larger audience who will find value in the design of the stories.

The tales have been categorized into five sections in order to make the stories consistent in terms of topic and nature of their creation. While classifying these stories, we were delighted to have discovered certain trends in the narration that are both universal and unique.

The first chapter on animal stories often tells of duality, perhaps suggestive of the human reader's dual nature (good/bad, rich/poor, happy/sad) and the contrasting, often clashing traits and actions that the animals portray. This duality can also refer to a certain competition that one wins (despite the obvious disadvantage on his part) because of wit, trickery, or even the vanity and conceit of the competitor. These creatures are often named for the color of their skin and the nature of their bodies, but they are also associated with traits often remarkably present in human nature—the monkey is covetous of others' possessions, the turtle is slow but calculating and wise, the tamaraw is aggressive and full of itself, the chicken is pitied for its hand-to-mouth survival (hence the famous Filipino idiom *isang kahig, isang tuka*, or "hand-to-mouth"). It can also be a duality based on love or the loss of it, as in the story of the spurned Spider out to exact revenge on the Fly, or how two creatures of exactly different taxonomies, the Sparrow and the Shrimp, showed their most admirable display of sacrifice for each other, though their relationship is doomed to begin with. These stories demonstrate that the inherent traits of animals often mirror the imperfections and problems of humans.

The second chapter on tales of enchantment shows the interweaving of pre-Hispanic and Hispanic elements in terms of gender attribution. The maiden becomes a motif for stories on the female aspects of nurturing, love, and concern (such as the celestial maiden Makaya and the mermaid who helped Tomas in the Surigao story). These are often portrayed as pagan representations of a goddess, but the main characters were later given a Christian name during the Spanish occupation of Luzon and Visayas. The stories of Maria Cacao of Mount Lantoy in Cebu, Mariang Makiling in Laguna, and Mariang Sinukuan in Arayat, Pampanga, are indicative of the natural fusion of the lady in the forest with the Virgin Mary. "Mariang Isda" reminds us of the steadfast and unwavering conviction of a woman against the scheming of a cruel stepmother (which is reminiscent of "Mariang Alimango" and "Cinderella"). Here, enchantment is an element often ascribed to the woman who is both generous and just, caring and yet punishing whenever necessary.

Another aspect of this chapter is the male propensity to define himself in terms of his family and territory as well as his natural sense of pride, protectiveness, competition, and adventure. One can see this in "Magboloto," "Tomas the Fisherman," and "The Old Tailor." It is also noticeable that while "Ibong Adarna" is a borrowed story, meaning that it has been resurrected in the Philippines from the many archaic metrical romances of Europe, it has been included because of the impact on the Filipinos living during Spanish times, who mirror themselves as the loyal and loving children in a family-oriented society. Some of the male characters, like the old tailor of Santa Ana and two-horned mayor of Ilocos, are patriarchal figures who mirror the culture and mind-set of male Filipinos during the Hispanic occupation. The story of the magical frog simply iterates the difference between good and bad.

The third chapter on *por quoi*, or "how and why" tales, often depicts the transformation of people or things based on the actions they manifest in the presence of stronger invincible forces, such as gods or deities. The result is the creation of the new to explain the unfamiliar. They can be categorized either as tales about plants (rice, mango, cashew nut, *lanzones*), animals (crab, bullfrog, bats), places (Chocolate Hills, Banaue, Lake Lanao, Mount Mayon, Cainta), celestial elements (stars, moon, sun), creation (B'laan, Mandaya), or persons (St. Martha, Infant Jesus). The transformation of plants and animals is the result of a misdeed or erratic behavior, often in the guise of teaching a lesson to persuade the listener or reader to conform to the common acceptable standard of conduct or to explain why things are. The formation of geological landscapes and features like mountains and bodies of water often has something to do with larger-than-life characters, involving either giants or gods, entangled in the affairs of mortals. Creation stories involve a creator and his plan to populate the earth with beings that mirror his image. People of high virtue can also be the source of names and origins of places and their cultural activities.

The fourth chapter proves that humor is intrinsic in Philippine folk traditions through irreverent characters often portrayed as lazy, cunning, tricky, or lacking in common sense. In the Tagalog region, the stories of "Juan Tamad" or "Suwan" or "Juan Posong" in the Visayas (all variants of "Foolish Jack" tales in European culture) have spun varieties that often evoke humor. "Pilandok the Mouse Deer" is often portrayed in Mindanao folklore as a trickster or a simpleton.

The final chapter on scary stories is proof of the current interest in Philippine gothic. These stories are modern and derivative takes on many supernatural stories. These are depicted through the presence of "white ladies," people with magical amulets called *agimat*, and witches. The contemporary element of these stories is often influenced by modern media in the form of films and

genre books that focus on suspense or horror. Nonetheless, these narratives add a unique flavor to ever-evolving forms of literature and entertainment in Filipino society.

Still, the question begs to be asked, Why add one more volume of stories? The answer lies in our belief that the stories presented in this volume, though retold in various ways, have become familiar to us in more ways than we can imagine. Our own renditions have given us the chance to learn of the power of these tales and share them with a new generation of readers. These stories speak with the same impact they did hundreds or thousands of years ago. While the world continually searches for the truth in life, this book is journey to a place where, once upon a time, the mysterious, the magical, and the mythical was something we deeply believed in. It defined our horizons and shaped the memories of the Filipino people as a culture, as a race, and as a nation.

THE PHILIPPINES: A PRIMER

The Philippines is an archipelago comprising approximately 7,107 islands including coral reefs and islet and is located between the Pacific Ocean in the east and South China Sea in the west. It is encircled by neighbors Taiwan in the north across the Luzon Strait, by the Republic of Palau in the east across the Philippine Sea, Indonesia through the Maluku (Moluccas) and Sulawesi (Celebes) islands and the Celebes Sea in the south and southeast, Malaysia through Sabah (North Borneo) in the southwest cross Sulu Sea, and Vietnam in the west across the South China Sea.

Its 22,549 miles (36,289 kilometers) of coastline makes it the country with the fifth-longest coastline in the world.[1] Geographically, the country is grouped into three regions—Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Politically, it is subdivided into 17 regions, including the National Capital Region, where the capital, Manila, is located. Officially known as the Republic of the Philippines (Republika ng Pilipinas/Filipinas), it has an estimated population of 92 million people, making it the 12th most populous country in the world, with an additional 11 million Filipino people living overseas.[2]

Before the Spanish arrived in the country, various names were attributed to the islands. The Chinese referred to the islands as "Ma-Yi," but it actually specifically pointed to island of Mindoro. When Ferdinand Magellan arrived, he named the islands "Islas de San Lazaro," as he arrived here on the feast day of St. Lazarus. It was also called "Islas del Poniente," or "Islands of the West."

The official name of the country is derived from the name of King Philip II (Rey Felipe El Segundo) of Spain, when Spanish explorer Ruy López de Villalobos, during his expedition in 1542, named the islands of Samar and Leyte after the then prince of Asturias (titular name of Philip II as crown prince). This name would eventually include Luzon, Mindanao, and the other islands of the Visayas.

During the Philippine Revolution in 1896 that led to the establishment of the First Republic, the country was officially declared "Republica Filipina" by its first president, Emilio Aguinaldo, who established a revolutionary government that lasted three years as it waged war with the incoming American colonizers. Under the American occupation, the country became officially known as the Philippine Islands (a translation of the Spanish "Islas Filipinas"). Later, during the establishment of the self-governing commonwealth government, the country became commonly known as the Philippines, even during the short-lived Second Republic under Japanese occupation. The name would later become official on the declaration of independence from the United States after World War II and the establishment of the Third Republic.

GEOGRAPHY

Its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire makes the Philippines prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, while typhoons coming mostly from the Pacific Ocean make it vulnerable to an average of 10 to 20 typhoons per year. Most of the islands are mountainous, with the inclusion of several active and inactive volcanoes, including Mount Apo, the highest mountain in the country, located in Mindanao; Mount Mayon in the Bicol Region, known not only for its almost perfect shape but also for the consistency of its eruption; Taal Volcano, a small volcano in the Southern Tagalog Region found in the center of Taal Lake, believed to be the remnant of a once very powerful volcano; and Mount Pinatubo, the 1991 eruption of which produced the second-largest terrestrial explosion of the 20th century.[3] Because of the volcanic nature of the terrain, minerals like gold, copper, nickel, chromite, and zinc are abundant. It is also the second-largest producer of geothermal energy after the United States. Natural gas is also abundant in several islands on the western part of the country, near Palawan.

The Philippines is also home to an extensive array of both terrestrial and marine plants and animals because of the natural existence of tropical rain forests and archipelagic coastlines. Considered one of the 10 most biologically megadiverse countries and almost on the top in terms of biodiversity per unit area,[4] it is home to almost 100 mammal species, 170 bird species, and 3,200 plant species.[5] Maritime waters encompassing almost 2.2 million kilometers have produced a unique and diverse marine life of about 2,400 fish species and more than 500 coral species.[6] The Philippines is part of the region known as the Coral Triangle, and its various water forms, both freshwater and seawater, are used for the cultivation of fish, crustaceans, seaweed, and pearl.[7]

The northernmost part of the country is the Batanes islands, while the southernmost are the Tawi-tawi Islands near Sabah. The westernmost part of the country consists of the Spratlys group of islands off the coast of Palawan, disputed by China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines, of which some islets and reefs are already claimed, in part or in name, by the country.

RACE AND ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY

The history of the identity of the Filipinos can be traced to the migratory waves that brought peoples from other parts of Asia to the archipelago. The first wave brought the ebony-skinned Negritos or Aetas or the aborigines of Southeast Asia. They are considered the first to arrive and are related to the Orang Asli of Malaysia;[8] they are a homogeneous group, did not intermarry with the later migrants, and lived far away from them, in the mountains and the hinterlands. A second wave of migration by the Senoi followed, but their assimilation with the Aetas has made their impact on the Filipino stock not largely evident.

The third and last major migration, which occurred during 4000–2000 B.C.E., is where the majority of ethnic Filipinos are descended from. They came from the Yunnan plateau from China traveling to the Philippine archipelago through Taiwan and downward toward Malaysia and Indonesia. This is contrary to the popular notion that Filipinos descend from the Malay or Indonesian race. The first settlement in the country was made by the Nesiot people, the ancestors of present-day Northern Luzon hill people of Cordillera, such as the Ifugaos, Bontoc, Kalinga, Isneg, Gaddang, and Tingguian, and the Lumad mountain tribes of Mindanao, such as the Manobo, Tasaday,

Mamanwa, Mandaya, and Kalagan. They are related to the hill tribes of Thailand, Malaysia, Borneo, and Indonesia.

Around 900 C.E., extensive trade had already taken place between the tribe kingdoms and other existing settlements across Southeast Asia, such as the ancient Shri-Vijayan Empire in present-day Indonesia and the hill kingdoms that are now parts of Cambodia or Vietnam. The Orang Dampuan from Champa (Cambodia) of Indochina intermarried with the Buranons, the original natives of Sulu, while the natives of the highly Indianized Bandjarmasin (the present-day Kalimantan in Indonesia) settled and intermarried with the established communities around Tawi-tawi and Sulu. There are also sporadic intermarriages with Arabs who have settled in the Malay Peninsula whose incidental entry to the country through Sulu and Maguindanao brought Islam to many areas in Mindanao. Trade conducted with the Chinese, who arrived in boats, brought the early Chinese settlements in the country like in Pangasinan and Tundun (now Tondo in Manila). The Laguna Copperplate inscription dated 900 C.E. is an indication of the high and homogeneous interaction of the early Filipinos with other communities throughout Asia. Indian merchants had also established residency and intermarried with some natives of Palawan and Bicol. Japanese traders brought agricultural and food technology and established small communities in areas like Davao.

The early Filipinos' tendency to intermarry with foreigners further expanded with the arrival of the Spaniards during the 1500s and the Hispanized Mexicans centuries later through colonization and the Galleon trade, which established Manila as one of the earliest trading centers of East Asia. Some Spaniards of Basque descent established businesses and assimilated with the Filipino communities, and these included the Zobels and the Aboitizes.

When the Americans administered their colonial authority in the 1900s, some Filipinos migrated to the United States, particularly to the West Coast and the islands of Hawaii, where they worked on plantations. They later intermarried and established communities. Some Americans, mostly those with missionary or teaching vocations, married Filipinos and became permanent residents in the Philippines. Since achieving complete independence from colonial authorities in 1946, the Filipinos' natural instinct to assimilate and adapt to foreign culture and language became more apparent when many of them migrated to different parts of the world, such as Europe, the Middle East, and the United States, where they started families and established businesses.

At the same time, ethnic Chinese migration has also brought a new generation of Chinese who consider themselves Filipino in terms of citizenship and culture and speak Philippine languages, such as Filipino, Hiligaynon, or Cebuano. North Americans, Europeans, Africans, Middle Easterners, and Asians who have come to the Philippines married or sired children with Filipinos who are either ethnically pure or have Chinese or Spanish ancestry. Unlike other Asian countries where its citizens are adverse to intermarriage, the Filipinos' cosmopolitan attitude and embrace of Western culture has made marrying foreigners acceptable and even enviable in some cases.

Ethnolinguistic diversity is also inherent among the Filipinos. The 17 subregions are classified based not only on the geographic aspects of the country but also on the demographic and ethnolinguistic features of its inhabitants. The subregions in Luzon include the Cordillera Autonomous Region, the Ilocos, the Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, and the islands of Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan, and Bicol. The subregions in the Visayas include the provinces located in and near the vicinity of the islands of Panay, Negros, Cebu, Bohol, Samar, and Leyte. The subregions in Mindanao include the entire island of Mindanao and its nearby island groups,

Siargao, Dinagat Islands, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-tawi. Ethnic identities loosely define many of these subregions, but recent migration and the common and accepted practice of intermarriage with foreigners (mostly Caucasians, Arabs, and East Asians) have diffused the ethnocultural identities of the people in these areas.

There are 100 or so different sea-based or highland-based tribal groups in the Philippines. Among Filipinos, they are ones least influenced by Western or Islamic cultures. Some of the people in this category include the highland tribes of the Cordillera; the Mangyan of Mindoro; the sporadic Aeta/Agta/Negrito groups in Zambales, Bataan, and Panay; the Lumad of Mindanao; and the Badjao or Yakan of the Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-tawi islands.

LANGUAGES

The official languages of the Philippines are Filipino, comprised of the native dialect of Tagalog, and English, as stated in the 1987 Constitution. As the national language, Filipino earns its rightful place in development and enrichment among users of Tagalog and other native tongues of the Philippines. The Filipino language is a veritable gumbo of dialects, borrowing words from English, Spanish, and other native tongues. These words were adopted and assimilated into the modern Filipino language. Filipino has become the lingua franca in Manila and all regions of the islands as well as in Filipino communities abroad.

Filipinos use the national language during formal occasions. Regional languages are relegated to nonformal and casual day-to-day events. This happens in regions where the vernacular is the lingua franca in areas such as Cebu, Pampanga, Ilocos, Bicol, and Davao, to name a few. Collectively, Filipinos could be considered polyglots who can speak not only the two official languages but the vernacular of the region as well as a foreign language (Spanish, French, German, Mandarin, Korean, and Japanese) taught in the academe.

In recent years, though, a resurgence of stories, essays, and articles in newspapers and books are being made available to the reading public, especially to the native people who grew up speaking their vernacular tongues, such as Hiligaynon, Ilocano, Cebuano, Bicolano, Waray, Kapampangan, and Pangasinense. The dictionary published by the University of the Philippines, *The UP Diksyunaryong Filipino*, includes words from the different Philippine languages commonly used in formal and informal speech and written communication. In spite of the progress in utilizing Filipino as the national language in varied forms of communication and the continued effort to preserve regional languages, English remains the dominant language used in business and commerce, education, science and technology, broadcast media, government, and the legal system.

It is important to note that English has become significant to Filipinos, particularly those living in urban areas. With the requirements of a fast-growing tourism industry and the business practice of outsourcing, Filipinos are expected to read, write, and speak English. Because of this, Filipinos are fast becoming an integral part of the overseas workforce in other countries. Many middle to upper-class Filipinos speak Taglish, which is an ambiguous form of bilingualism or diglossia since it fluidly shifts grammar and syntax from Tagalog to English and vice versa. There are also recent reworkings on Filipino, usually done by code switching, as shown by the rise of the use of Filipino "gayspeak" (by various homosexual groups) or with the influence of technology in the use of the short messaging service functions of mobile phones or the Internet, such as jejemon or LOLspeak.

In recent years, because of the effects of globalization on media, words from other Asian languages like Japanese, Thai, and Korean, are slowly being integrated into Filipino, largely because of their introduction into broadcast media. Filipinos working overseas in communities like the Middle East and Europe have also introduced words or phrases that are becoming part of the lingua franca.

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TODAY'S FILIPINO STORYTELLING COMMUNITY

It is an exciting time to be a storyteller in Manila. There has been a surge of invitations for storytelling gigs in schools, libraries, and malls. Bookings for workshops, seminars, and teacher-librarian training sessions are abundant for the Filipino storyteller. These events happen not only in Manila but in city provinces as well.

Publishing houses such as Adarna House and Anvil Publishing keep a pool of storytellers whom they can call on for book launches or literacy events. Children's television and radio shows feature regular storytelling sessions by a resident teller or a celebrity guest. Even at children's parties, the storyteller enjoys top billing alongside the magician and the party clown. If these are portents of good things to come, then the Filipino storyteller should be thankful to those who have cleared the path in resurrecting this ancient and forgotten craft.

Filipino storytelling has enjoyed a recent renaissance. For the past two decades, reading and literacy advocates were responsible for plucking storytelling out of the confines of the home and the classroom into venues that are more open and commercial. Ironically, technology has breathed new life into the ancient art of storytelling by allowing listeners the ability access information about events through websites and social networking sites such as Facebook.

The 1990s brought several technological trends and economic transitions that affected the smallest unit of society, the family. The exodus of Filipino middle-class workers for greener pastures continued. The Internet created a buzz in business and in education. Children growing up in the 1990s were exposed to television, computers, and video games, while their parents were at work locally or overseas. Between 1990 and 1994, the country's literacy rate was relatively high. This 95 percent literacy rate was not a guarantee that Filipino children were habitual readers or immersed in a culture of reading.

Organizations like the Philippine Board on Books for Young People (PBBY) felt the impact, though subtle, of the changes in the children and how they learn. In the early 1990s, the board set out to improve reading and literacy development among the city's young people. One of the activities that PBBY organized were storytelling sessions in a little library at the Rizal Park in Manila. For years, that little library became a haven for street children of Manila. School-aged children from neighboring districts like Pasay and Quezon City flocked to the library too.

Every Saturday morning, volunteer storytellers would come to tell stories. A simple read-aloud was the favored technique. Volunteers came from all walks of life—teachers, librarians,

college students, *barangay* (neighborhood) counselors, the mayor, actors, puppeteers, a senator's wife, college deans and professors, and even national artists.

At this juncture, Filipino storytelling happened because of the art's educative purpose. Virgilio Almario, national artist for literature, stated that although storytelling was for entertainment, it was done primarily as a strategy for teaching children.

Around the same time, *Batibot*, a children's television show, featured a regular storyteller named Kuya Bodjie Pascua. He was an effective and compelling performer and thus became a role model for aspiring storytellers. Although *Batibot* discontinued production in 2001, Kuya Bodjie continues telling stories. He conducts workshops, does theater productions, and still appears on television.

In 1999 Kuya Bodjie was part of the core group who organized the Alitaptap Storytellers Club. Nina Lim-Yuson, then the executive director of Museo Pambata (Children's Museum in Manila), was their sponsor and "godmother." The Alitaptap Storytellers Club had a cadre of dedicated literacy advocates determined to instill in children a genuine love for books and reading through storytelling. Along with Kuya Bodjie, the core group consisted of Rose Gonzales, Melody Remorca, Cindy Cruz-Cabrera, and Manolo Silayan. When PBBY held its first nationwide storytelling contest, Melody Remorca emerged as champion. From then on, PBBY, in collaboration with the Alitaptap Storyteller's Club, held a biannual contest and announced open calls for contestants.

The Alitaptap Storytellers Club has evolved since the late 1990s. Through the leadership of Manolo Silayan, it has partnered with the National Library and the Reading Association of the Philippines to further promote storytelling as an effective strategy to enhance communication arts skills among children. Now known as the Alitaptap Storytellers Philippines, it has added innovative techniques like tandem telling, readers' theater, and a storytelling troupe. This is in addition to its traditional book-based storytelling, in which the storyteller holds the book while acting out the story. In Filipino, *alitaptap* means "firefly." The light that glows on a firefly is an apt metaphor for the way an audience glows after a storytelling. The Alitaptap guild continues to grow. Each year, they conduct workshops on the art of storytelling. Because of the awareness Alitaptap brought to storytelling, publishers, schools, libraries, and other organizations ask their members to do storytelling sessions. In collaboration with Lampara Publishing House, the Alitaptap Storytellers Philippines had a successful run of storytelling contests for kids, teenagers, and adults at the recently concluded Manila International Book Fair.

Thus, the pioneering efforts of PBBY, Museo Pambata, the Alitaptap Storytellers Philippines, the National Library, and the Reading Association of the Philippines is making storytelling a staple activity in the Filipino child's learning environment. It has also led to an increased use of storytelling by many individuals and organizations from the local government as well as the private sector.

In 2005 the Department of Education launched the Library Hub Project. Training in the art of storytelling and book selection for young readers was provided for teacher-librarians assigned to the various library hubs. In 2007, the National Book Development Board (NBDB) organized a "Caught Reading" campaign nationwide. Celebrities posed with his or her favorite book to promote the campaign. Posters adorned bookstores, libraries, and schools. Part of the campaign included read-alouds at area malls. The campaign attracted attention and inspired the NBDB to collaborate with a private organization to create the first Manila International Storytelling Festival (MISF) in 2009. Visiting storytellers from the United States and Singapore came to the Philippine shores and regaled participants with a variety of stories using different techniques.

It is important to note that the MISF was not the first experience of many Filipinos to see storytelling performed without the use of a book. International storyteller and award-winning author Dianne de Las Casas visited in 2004, five years before the first MISF, courtesy of Scholastic Book Fairs Philippines. At that time, this multinational book company was perceived as a foreign and fierce competitor of local publishing houses. They broke ground, however, by bringing in Ms. de Las Casas to facilitate workshops on storytelling. She brought in a lot of fun, music, play, drama, and warmth to her performances, endearing her to many Filipinos young and old alike. She has traveled to provinces in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, and her performances earned her many fans and admirers. Her interactive storytelling style made a tremendous impact on the lives of many Filipino storytellers whose technique depended heavily on book-based storytelling. To this day, Ms. de Las Casas tours in the Philippines and remains a great influence and inspiration to many teachers, librarians, parents, storytellers, and authors.

Libraries in the Philippines have been proponents of storytelling too. The 1996 school library standards of the Philippines Department of Education include, in its implementing guidelines, a provision for a storytelling venue in the library. Because of this, many school libraries infuse storytelling activities in their literacy events throughout the year. Parents are invited to visit their children's class or school library to tell stories. Authors and illustrators are invited share their books.

The Quezon City Public Library has a continuing program on storytelling in all their branch libraries. Troy Lacsamana, the librarian assigned to monitor these branch libraries, organized a storytelling session by senior citizens in 2009. One library that he supervises, the Aklatang Pambata, is now a storytelling hub for children and teens in Barangay Paltok and Crus na Ligas in Quezon City.

Mr. Lacsamana discovered an improved interest among kids to visit the library and read books, which he attributes directly to the regular storytelling sessions the library offers. In higher education, storytelling workshops for education majors and nursing students take place every semester. It is interesting to note that storytelling programs and workshops are being included in noneducation fields. A peace camp and conference on Unity in Diversity featured storytelling as one of its main activities.

Storytelling earned top billing at a leading university in Manila as a technique to enhance business and management skills. A Philippine Charity Office halfway house for sick children in the adopted a regular storytelling activity by its nurses and doctors for their patients. Dr. Luis Gatmaitan, writer and doctor, visits many war-torn provinces in Mindanao to heal children who are victims of armed conflict. He uses stories as therapy and medicine.

The Hudhud chanters from the Ifugao have preserved their art and culture of storytelling. In scheduled performances at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Hudhud chanters relive the noble acts and mystical feats of their epic heroes, Pumbakhayon and Aliguyon.

This is the thriving scene of the Filipino storytelling community today. Storytelling is used in schools, libraries, and communities as a strategy to learn life skills and lessons. The Filipino storytelling community is vibrant and alive. In the 7,000 Isles, storytelling has become not only a means to entertain and to educate but also an instrument to discover one's cultural and spiritual identity.

PART 1

ANIMAL STORIES

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THE MONKEY AND THE TURTLE: THE BANANA THIEVES

Pampanga, Central Luzon

Story Note: There are many stories about Monkey and Turtle being friends and the former tricking the later. Monkey often fools Turtle and places them in a situation where Monkey has the advantage. But Turtle seems to know how to weasel his way out of Monkey's tricks. In this story, Turtle finds himself in a dead end. Fortunately, Monkey's selfishness sets Turtle free.

Monkey and Turtle were exploring the new road near the river. A group of new settlers from the other side of the river arrived many months before. They cleared a path down by the river in this area. They planted bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, and corn.

This meant food for the two friends! They needed to tread carefully for the new settlers were often unpredictable.

As they walked, Monkey's eyes darted here and there, on the alert for both danger and for ripe bananas to pick. In no time, Monkey spotted a banana plant heavy with fruit. Unwilling to risk capture, he came up with a plan.

"That banana plant's fruit look ripe enough," he told Turtle.

"Yes, Monkey, you are right. The bananas are ready to pick. Do you think the settlers left some overripe bananas by the roadside?" Turtle asked his friend.

"Why depend on them when we can get some straight from the plants like we used to?" Monkey replied.

"But these are new settlers," Turtle hesitated. "We do not know whether they are kind or mean!"

Monkey egged Turtle on. "There's no harm in trying. Go get a stick and pull those ripe yellow bananas down!"

Turtle did as Monkey suggested. When he found a stick tall enough to use as *panungkit*, a hook, he went back. "This is something I cannot do, Monkey. It was your idea in the first place," he said, handing the stick to Monkey.

"Then you should challenge yourself. We both know I can do it. You need to try and accomplish this feat. Hurry and get us both some ripe bananas," Monkey coaxed.

Without another word, Turtle went to the nearest banana plant full of ripe fruits. He poked each banana until, one by one, they fell to the ground. Monkey ran near his friend to help him gather the bananas, but suddenly, two boys rushed out of the bushes. They chased after the banana thieves.

Immediately, agile Monkey climbed up a banana plant. Then, with one big leap, he swung to the top of a nearby guava tree. Turtle was left alone on the ground, scuttling to escape.

The two boys caught Turtle and bound his flippers. Afraid that the boys would hurt him, Turtle stayed still. One of the boys picked up a banana. He peeled the yellow fruit and, piece after piece, gently fed Turtle.

Monkey watched everything that was happening below. His heart swelled with envy. It was his idea in the first place to eat the banana fruit! Now, it was his friend who benefited from his idea. Monkey thought, *it's unfair!*

After a few more pieces of banana, the two boys left Turtle. They ran back into the bushes they came from. This was Monkey's chance! He jumped down from the tree and ran to his friend. He unbound him, carried him to the river, and left him wading in the water. Turtle did not know how to thank his friend. He called for Monkey to stay away from the banana trees. Turtle was afraid that something bad might happen to Monkey.

When the two boys returned, they were surprised to find a monkey on the spot where they left turtle. Monkey hoped that the boys would give him the same treatment they gave Turtle. But, much to his surprise, the two boys tied a rope around Monkey's neck, picked up a stick, and beat him on the back. They carried him to the path by the river.

Turtle heard Monkey's cries of pain from the distance.

THE CROW AND THE GECKO

Lepanto, Mountain Province, Cordillera Autonomous Region

Story Note: There are many Porquoi tales about the crow's black sheen. This one explains why it is the gecko's fault that, to this day, the crow wears its feathers black.

Crow and Gecko were very good friends.

One day, Gecko said to Crow, "Let's tattoo each other's bodies. Wouldn't we look handsome?"

"I would love to be handsome. Yes, that is a good idea!" Crow agreed.

"You can help me prepare the things we need tomorrow. I'll see you in my cave,"

Gecko replied.

The following morning, Crow and Gecko were busy preparing ink and quill. When everything was ready, Crow said to Gecko, "Let me paint on you first. Then, when I'm done with your tattoo, you can do mine."

Gecko agreed. He loved being served first. Crow took his time. Working carefully and patiently on Gecko's eyes, nose, and mouth, he painted ebony all the way down his back and across his tail. Crow's designs were intricate and beautiful. The dark ink jumped visibly from Gecko's skin.

"There." Crow sighed. "Yours is done. Now it's your turn to do my tattoo."

Gecko started to work on Crow's feathers. The task was too tedious for Gecko. His attention wandered to his friends basking in the sun. He longed to show his friends his exquisite tattoo. They would be envious of him. He thought of a way to escape his responsibility.

Body tattooing is an ancient, precolonial art that is indicative of one's maturity or an aesthetic expression of one's cultural and social attributes. In Luzon island, the tribes who continue to practice tattooing include the Ifugao, Kankaney, Kalinga, and Ibaloi of the Mountain Province. Tattooing is also practiced in the Visayas islands by the Visayan Pintados and in Mindanao by the Tiboli tribe. For modern-day Filipinos, body tattooing is a way to reconnect to one's native roots. This photo shows the tattoo of the alibata, the precolonial Filipino alphabet, on the arm of a young Filipino American man.

“Crow, I hear wolves barking in the distance! We have to get away! I know an easier way to finish your tattoo!” Gecko exclaimed.

Gecko spilled all of the ink on Crow’s body and quickly shimmied away from his friend’s sight. To this day, Gecko has a beautifully designed, tattooed body, while Crow’s feathers remain black as night.

THE CHICKEN AND THE CROW

Cagayan Valley, Northern Luzon

Crow owned a beautiful ring. Chicken was jealous of Crow. Not only could Crow fly, but she also possessed a shiny golden ring. It glistened in the sun as Crow flew. Deep in her heart, Chicken coveted the golden ring.

"Crow!" Chicken shouted when she saw her black silhouette against the clear blue sky.

Crow flew down to where Chicken was sitting. "What can I do for you, Chicken?"

"I have admired your ring for so long," explained Chicken. "May I borrow it for a day to see how it would look on me?"

Crow agreed and lent her the ring. "Be very careful, my friend. This ring is an heirloom from my mother's side. I would be very upset if it were lost."

While illegal in the United States, cockfighting, or *sabong*, is still a popular gambling sport in the Philippines. Roosters are precious pets for cockfighters who frequent cockpits every weekend. The roosters are dressed with razor-sharp heels on their talons and are pitted against each other. The rooster wins when it kills its opponent or if it has turned its tail and faced away from its opponent. The owner wins as well as those who placed their bets on the winning rooster.

Chicken marveled at the ring. She promised to keep it safe while the ring was in her possession.

That afternoon, as Chicken was walking her chicks back to the chicken coop, she noticed the ring missing from her finger. Frantically, she searched for the ring but could not find it. That night, Chicken could not sleep. She was torn. Should she tell Crow the truth or make up a lie?

The following day, Crow came back and asked for her ring from Chicken.

Chicken created an elaborate lie and clucked, "My husband, Rooster, was mad when he saw me wearing the ring, so I threw it to the river. He said that our kind should never be friends with your kind."

This angered Crow. She flew over the river and along its length. She rested on the banks of the river and asked the fish to look for her precious ring. After a while, the fish came back with no news of the golden ring.

Crow was furious. She flew back to Chicken and cried angrily, “From now on, I will peck on your chicks as payment for my golden ring you claimed you threw into the river. Never again will I call you friend!”

With a swift flap of her wings, Crow glided down to peck one of Chicken’s chicks with her sharp talons. Chicken was horrified.

Since then, chickens scratch and peck at the earth in search of the missing ring, hoping to stop crows from preying on their chicks. To this day, the golden ring remains missing.

THE TALE OF COW AND CARABAO

Bulacan, Southern Tagalog Region

Long ago, Cow and Carabao were good friends. At that time, Cow's skin was tight while Carabao's skin was loose.

They both decided to bathe in the river one hot summer day. There were so many animals swimming in the cool water that they thought it would be better to move upriver to avoid the crowd. On their way upriver, they came upon a big fish pond.

Cow stopped in her tracks and looked at the pond. It was clean. She dipped one of her hooves in the cool water. It felt good. "What if we bathe here instead, Carabao?" Cow asked her friend.

"I'm not sure it is safe to do that," Carabao replied.

"Why not?" Cow asked

"This pond has an owner. Look at the fences that surround the other side," Carabao answered.

Cow stretched her neck and looked. Yes, the fence said it all. Some farmer owned the pond for breeding fish.

"But this side is open. We can take a quick dip," Cow insisted.

"It is open because the farmer who owns it needs to look after his fish," Carabao replied.

"We won't take long. Come on!" Cow took off her skin and waded in the shallow end of the pond.

Carabao followed. She left her skin beside Cow's. They bathed and played for a while. The afternoon waned, and they lost track of time. Soon, they heard an angry cry. They turned and saw an angry farmer waving a bamboo stick.

The carabao is the national animal. It is the most familiar beast of burden in the Philippines and a farmer's best friend. Milk from the carabao can be made into candies, and Carabao meat is healthier than pork or beef because it is low in cholesterol. Its horns and hide are used as decorations, combs, trumpets, and knife handles.

Cow immediately rose from the pond. She hastily picked up a skin and put it on. It was Carabao's loose skin. She ran away quickly while Carabao struggled to put on Cow's tight skin. Carabao had difficulty moving with the tight new skin. The farmer caught up with her and gave her a good beating.

The two beasts of burden never had the chance to exchange skins because since then, Cow has avoided Carabao. To this day, carabaos have tight, fitted skin, while cows have loosely hanging skin.

MONKEY AND TURTLE'S BANANAS

Pampanga, Central Luzon

Monkey and Turtle were once very good friends. One day, they were walking when they found a banana tree lying on the ground. The tree was full of ripe yellow bananas. The friends agreed to split the banana tree in half. Immediately, Monkey's greed surfaced.

He said to Turtle, "Since I am the stronger of the two of us, I shall take the top half of the tree, which is much heavier."

Turtle agreed and took the bottom half. When Monkey got home, he feasted on delicious bananas. But, after some time, the bananas were gone. Curious about what Turtle did with his half of the tree, Monkey paid Turtle a visit. He was met with a great surprise!

Turtle had taken his half of the banana tree, planted it, watered it, and took care of it. It was tall and full of bunches of ripe yellow bananas. Since Turtle was unable to climb the tree to get the bananas, he asked, "Monkey, would you be so kind as to climb the tree and pick the bananas for me?"

Again, Monkey's greed surfaced. "Of course," he said to Turtle. He scaled the tree, and when he reached the top, instead of picking bananas and throwing them to Turtle, he began peeling them and eating them one by one.

Turtle cried, "You cannot eat all of my bananas!"

But Monkey just grinned and continued eating. So Turtle had a plan. In retaliation, he placed thorns at the bottom of the banana tree trunk. When Monkey climbed down, prickly thorns stuck his tail and backside. He sat down to pick out the thorns when he spotted Turtle.

"There you are!" Monkey cried. I am going to punish you for this! I shall pound you to pieces.

Turtle said, "Very well. Pound me to pieces if you must. But I will multiply and more turtles will appear."

Monkey said, "Then I will not pound you. I shall throw you into a fire!"

Turtle said, "Very well. Throw me into a fire if you must. But I will not turn black. Instead I will turn red and become the most beautiful animal in all of the jungle."

Monkey said, "Then I will not throw you into a fire. I shall throw you into the river!"

Turtle cried, "No, please don't throw me into the river for I shall drown!"

Monkey did not listen. He picked Turtle up and heaved him into the river. Turtle hit the water with a splash. Monkey thought that he was rid of Turtle once and for all. But instead, Turtle surfaced

and swam up and down the river. Turtle laughed, “Ha! Ha! Ha! I live on the land but I also live in the . . . water!”

From that time forward, Monkey and Turtle stay in their separate parts of the jungle. But to this day, you can still find bananas trees in the jungle, full of ripe yellow bananas.

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

Cavite, Southern Tagalog Region

Once upon a time, Spider was madly in love with Fly. Fly, on the other hand, despised Spider. Spider pursued Fly, but she ignored him. He was relentless, but she was unwavering. Spider was indeed a hard-to-discourage suitor. One night, when Fly knew Spider would come calling, she boiled a big pot of water.

***Gagamba*, the Tagalog word for "spider," is used for a game called spider fighting. Two spiders are pitted against each other on a long, thin stick of bamboo. The spider who spins a web and traps its opponent wins. The owner wins too. This game is played by teens and adults alike. The spider owners keep their "pets" in separate match boxes. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.**

When Spider came courting, Fly welcomed her ardent suitor by dousing him with hot water. Spider yelped in pain. His pride was as badly burned as his head.

"You have hurt me beyond forgiveness!" Spider spat at Fly. He gathered whatever strength he could muster and angrily cursed Fly to the heavens.

"From now on, my kind will look at yours with utmost hatred. I will weave a web of despair and entrap you there forever! Slowly, you will die as I suck your blood and life away!"

So, to this very day, flies fear spiders.

FATHER RAT FINDS A MIDWIFE

Quezon Province, Southern Tagalog Region

Mother Rat was pregnant. She called for her husband. Father Rat came running to her side.

"Get me a midwife! It's going to be quadruplets!" she screamed as she went into labor.

"What does a midwife look like?" he asked.

"Oh, she has a gentle face and a tender voice. She would not hurt a pregnant mother like me," she replied.

Father Rat began searching for a midwife. Down the road, he met Dog. He stopped and looked Dog over.

"Mr. Rat, how may I help you?" Dog asked politely but with a gruff voice.

"I am looking for a midwife. My wife will give birth soon," Father Rat replied.

"I may be able to help. Arf! Arf!" Dog barked in excitement.

Father Rat shook his head. "You do not look gentle at all with those floppy ears and big nose. Oh, no! And your voice sounds so rough!"

Father Rat ran past Dog and continued his search. Down the road, He met Cow. Father Rat looked him over.

"Mr. Rat, how may I help you?" Cow asked politely but with a bellowing voice.

"I am looking for a midwife. My wife will give birth soon," Father Rat replied.

"I may be able to help. Moo! Moo!" Cow mooed in earnest.

Father Rat shook his head. "You do not look gentle at all with those horns and big belly. Oh, no! And your voice sounds so loud!"

Father Rat ran past Cow and continued his search. Farther down the road, he met Cat. Father Rat looked her over.

"Mr. Rat, how may I help you?" Cat asked politely but slyly.

"I am looking for a midwife. My wife will give birth soon," Father Rat replied.

"I may be able to help. Meow! Meow!" Cat purred and surreptitiously licked her lips.

Father Rat looked her over again. "You do have a tender voice. You look gentle to me. Yes, I think you are the midwife my wife wants me to fetch."

So Father Rat and Cat ran back to Mother Rat. Cat was a gentle and a tender midwife indeed. She helped Mother Rat give birth to four little rats.

"Fetch me some water, Father Rat," Cat told him, "for your wife and your four cute little babies!"

Father Rat did as he was told, but when he came back from his errand, he found no one else in his house. There was only the faint smell of a well-fed Cat. Since that ill-fated day, cats have become rats' mortal enemy.

TAMARAW AND KOHOL

Mindoro, Southern Tagalog Region

Tamaraw, a beautiful bird, drank from a stream one day. He saw Kohol, a small snail, inching her way up stream.

"You are so slow. I pity you. It will take ages till you reach the river and go up the falls!" Tamaraw said with thick conceit.

"Oh, but I can beat you in a race!" Kohol courageously replied.

"Really?" Tamaraw asked, slightly irritated. "Let's race then! Your feeble crawling on the bank of the stream cannot possibly compare to my running on the land."

Kohol said simply, "We'll see."

What Tamaraw did not know was that one of Kohol's cousins was just a short distance away from Kohol. Kohol sent a message to his cousin. His cousin sent a message farther upstream to another family member until Kohol's entire family lined up near the stream.

Tamaraw and Kohol began the race.

Tamaraw sped a good distance from the starting point. He took a glimpse by the stream and saw Kohol creeping by. He continued running, doubling his speed this time. When he reached the bend where the stream ended, he saw Kohol creeping by once again. With one swift turn, he tripled his speed up the falls. When he reached the base of the falls, he saw Kohol comfortably sitting in a big flat rock.

"What took you so long, Tamaraw?" Kohol asked.

"I don't believe this! A kohol has beaten me in a race?!" Tamaraw bellowed and thrashed about, but it was his ego that took the greater beating.

Kohol is an edible snail found in rivers or seas. Cooked in vinegar and coconut milk, similar to *ceviche*, it is considered a delicacy.

THE MONKEY AND THE HERON—AMOMOWAI AND TATALAONGA

Lanao del Sur, Mindanao

Amomowai the Monkey and Tatalaonga the Heron were friends.

One day they decided to sail across the sea to reach the next island. Tatalaonga looked for a boat, but there was none. Amomowai thought of building a raft instead, so they did. It was a strong raft built for two.

"Let's gather some sugarcane so we won't get hungry during the voyage," Tatalaonga said.

"That's a good idea!" Amomowai replied.

They stopped by a farmer's sugarcane plantation. They asked for permission to gather sugarcane, and when the farmer allowed them, they cut the sticks. When they had their fill, they tied the sugarcane sticks in a bundle. Then they went to the raft and set adrift.

In the middle of the sea, Amomowai got thirsty.

"I would like to drink, Tatalaonga," Amomowai said.

'Then, drink from the sea," Tatalaonga replied.

"But the water from the sea is too salty. Besides, I'm your friend. You would not let me die of thirst. Give me a stick of sugarcane to chew," Amomowai said.

Tatalaonga looked at Amomowai then said, "Before I give you one, let me tell you this—

Tambor ganding sa lawod
Dowaang ka, Amomo!
Beat the drum from the high seas
I pity you, Amomo!"

Monkeys appear in many Filipino folktales. Characterized as cunning, witty, and sly, the monkey is often depicted as the opposite of the good and humble. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

Tatalaonga gave Amomowai a sugarcane stick to chew on. Amomowai chewed on the sugar stick with relish, and when he was done, he asked for another, and another, and another until there was only one stick of sugarcane left. Amomowai begged for it.

"If you are true friend, you would give me the last sugarcane stick to chew on!" Amomowai insisted. Then he wailed, "Ayayay! It is so sweet and I want it, Tatalaonga!"

Tatalaonga looked at Amomowai, then said, “Before I give you the last stick of sugarcane, let me tell you this—

Tambor ganding sa lawod
Matai ka, Amomo!
Beat the drum from the high seas
You will die, Amomo!”

Tatalaonga gave the last stick of sugarcane to Amomowai. When he was done chewing the stick, the raft began to sink. A big fish swam by and ate Amomowai alive. Tatalaonga flew the remaining distance to the island.

THE BUTTERFLY WHO WISHED TO BE A GOD

Lanao del Sur, Mindanao

Allah had a favorite butterfly. Whenever the butterfly had a wish, Allah granted it.

One day, the butterfly wandered in the garden of a sultan. The butterfly saw the fine life the sultan led. The sultan had servants to do his bidding. The sultan had many performers to amuse him and keep him entertained. The sultan had many wives and concubines. This was the life the butterfly wanted.

It flew back to Allah and made a wish. "Allah, all powerful and kind, I wish to be a sultan!" the butterfly asked Allah.

Allah thought for a minute, then called a djinn [genie]. In a puff of smoke, the djinn appeared.

"Allah, all powerful and kind, your wish is my command," the djinn greeted.

"My favorite butterfly wishes to be a sultan. Grant him his wish."

With a wave of the djinn's hands, the butterfly became a sultan. He had his fill of wives and concubines. He had a never-ending string of entertainers and jesters to perform for his amusement. His servants obeyed his every order. It was the life he wanted. He became bored and eventually grew tired of the life of a sultan.

Butterfly sanctuaries can be found in Manila and in provinces all over the Philippines. Rizal, Palawan, and Bohol are provinces that house butterflies for their protection and propagation. Each sanctuary takes care of species indigenous and unique to that particular province. This butterfly was found in Bohol.

One day, a prophet came to his court bearing visions of the future. The sultan asked the prophet many questions. He was impressed with all the prophet's answers. The prophet was so wise. People listened to a prophet more than to a sultan. It was the life he wanted.

That night, the sultan prayed to Allah. He wished to be a prophet. Allah came to his room with the djinn beside him.

"You know his wish. And he is my favorite sultan," Allah told the djinn.

With a wave of the djinn's hands, the sultan became a prophet.

The prophet traveled near and far. People listened to him. He had answers to all sorts of questions. He had admirers as well as enemies. He received many gifts from believers. However, he also received threats from those who opposed his work. He began questioning the security of this life he wished for. He started to fear the daylight and spent countless sleepless nights.

One day as he was walking, a group of men barred his way. They took his belongings and beat him up. One of the men, who gave him a heavy blow to his stomach, shouted at him. "Foolish prophet! Preening like a rooster! Your arrogance is not worthy of Allah's grace! Who do you think you are? A god?"

His aggressors left him on the road bleeding. In his pain and struggle, the prophet called upon Allah and wished to be god.

Allah appeared before him and said, "No, you will become a butterfly once again. You will live a short and delicate life but one that is truly meaningful. Your journey to change will be painful and dark. And you will wait a while as you grow wings once again. You will see the light, my favorite butterfly."

The prophet shrunk and was transformed back to his original form. To this day, caterpillars weave a cocoon for days where they stay there until, after days in the dark, they burst forth into the light with delicate, beautiful wings. They fly from flower to flower helping plants grow and reproduce, leading a short but meaningful life.

THE SPARROW AND THE SHRIMP

Lanao del Norte, Mindanao

Though they were an unlikely pair, Sparrow dearly loved Shrimp. He asked for Shrimp's hand in marriage. Shrimp accepted Sparrow's proposal. After the wedding, Sparrow went with Shrimp to live in the sea, but Sparrow could not swim. He almost drowned. He flew up for air.

"What if you live with me in the field?" Sparrow asked.

"I could try that," Shrimp replied.

Shrimp held on to Sparrow. When they reached the field, Sparrow laid her down on dried hay. The sun was too hot for Shrimp and she started turning red.

"I am burning!" Shrimp yelled. "Bring me back to the sea."

Sparrow lifted her up and quickly flew to the sea, where he dropped his wife in the cool water.

"I do not think this marriage will work out for us, Sparrow," Shrimp said sadly.

"Do not say that. We can always try and work things out," Sparrow assured her.

"Then what will we do?" Shrimp asked her husband.

"I will fly over the sea by day, and at night, we stay in the fields so I can gather food, eat, and rest."

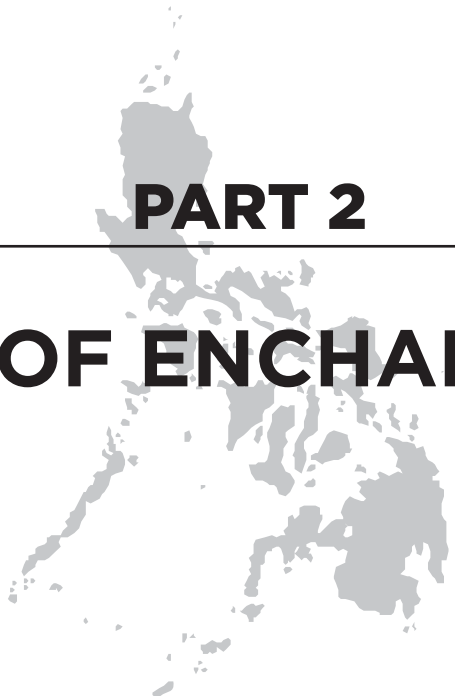
"That sounds like a good arrangement," said Shrimp.

The couple's arrangement worked out well. Sparrow would bring Shrimp to the field, where they would spend the night. In the morning, after feeding, Sparrow would fly her back to sea.

A popular seafood, shrimp and prawns flavor many Filipino dishes. It is present in *pansit* (a noodle dish), *lumpia* (a type of egg roll), *sinigang* (a type of soup), and *relleno* (stuffed dishes).

One night, when Sparrow was gathering food, a fire broke out in the field. It soon spread to the place where Shrimp lay. The hay she was lying on was dry and brown. The only thing Shrimp could do was cry out for Sparrow.

When Sparrow saw the big smoke and the light of the fire's mighty blaze, he flew swiftly to where Shrimp lay. The smoke was thick and the fire was out of control. In a billowing cloud of smoke, Sparrow saw Shrimp's body, red and burned. Sparrow lost his will to fly, seeing that his wife was dead. Sparrow covered his wings on Shrimp's red and burning body. He lay beside his wife, allowing the unforgiving flames to engulf him.



PART 2

TALES OF ENCHANTMENT

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THE OLD TAILOR

National Capitol Region

There lived in the old town of Santa Ana an old tailor who was exceptional at his chosen trade. His customers were filled with words of praise for his craft and skill. It wasn't surprising since he could design any kind of clothes ordered by his patrons. His measurements were precise. His eye for detail was perfect. He could sew, snip, and stitch any style. Whether it was a gown for the discriminating wife of the town's richest man, a fine *Barong Tagalog* for the town mayor's snotty son, a band uniform for the prettiest majorette, or a work suit for the common carpenter, the old tailor could make the clothes. And he made them well.

The old tailor had one peculiarity. He refused to make new clothes for himself. His wife relentlessly recited the advantages of being presentable in front of his customers. But the old man held fast to his notions.

The tailor's wife reasoned, "Husband, you are very good at what you do, so the clothes you wear must speak for your excellence. Wearing old and shaggy clothes can be bad for business. Besides, people judge others by what they wear."

Wearing the *Barong Tagalog* is a national tradition in the Philippines. These lightweight, intricately embroidered shirts are worn by men for formal occasions, such as weddings and formal events. It is akin to the tuxedo in the United States. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

But the old tailor would only shrug and smile. "My dear wife, you worry too much."

One day, his wife brought in rolls of new cloth from the market. She laid them down on his table and triumphantly exclaimed, "With these bolts from the traders, I bet you could sew something new for yourself!"

The old tailor put down his shears and a meter long of gingham. He examined the rolls of cloth with deft hands and fingers. Sliding one hand on the softness of red satin, he knew it would make a perfect *chiongsam*, a beautiful fitted dress for the Chinese trader's fiancé. He pulled out the next roll and caressed the comfort of cotton. He heard it breathe and whisper many a boy's lazy summers spent playing by the hills and the riverbank. He rubbed a patch

from the bolt of wool, fuzzy and warm. It would make a snug sweater for the sailor who lived next door. He shook the sturdy denim with both hands and imagined the useful jackets and work pants it would make for the miner. He pulled delicate *pinya*, cloth made from pineapple fiber, and organza from the pile. Their spun golden and silver gauze would delight a hopeful bridesmaid.

"Ah," he said to his wife with a satisfying sigh. "These will fashion wonderful clothes for my future customers."

Surprised, his wife asked, "You are not going to make something new for yourself? Not even a shirt, perhaps?"

"No, dear. I am still waiting for the right kind of cloth." He smiled dreamily.

"Really?" His wife asked, bewildered. "What exactly is the kind of cloth you're looking for? Perhaps I can ask the Chinese trader if he has what you desire."

With a deep sigh, the old tailor replied, "That cloth would be as beautiful as a rainbow, as strong as steel, as soft as the wind, and as warm as a blanket for a cold, cold night."

The tailor's wife laughed, thinking he was joking.

Early one morning, as the old tailor prepared for the day, he discovered that he ran out of red buttons and white lace. He took some money and went to the market. When he reached the familiar road leading to the noisy, busy market, he hurried to the Chinese trader's store.

The store was empty except for the presence of the Chinese merchant seated behind the cash register, absorbed in the morning newspaper.

"Good morning, Po Xie Ho!" the old tailor exclaimed with a big smile on his face. "I need to finish the mayor's dinner jacket by next week. I ran out of red buttons and white lace."

The Chinese merchant looked up and returned the smile. "Oh yes!" He stood up and walked out of the cashier's booth. From a wooden drawer, he removed a dozen red, shiny buttons and a meter of white lace rolled in a spindle.

Po Xie Ho said to the tailor, "I have something else to show you. You may be able to make wonderful things out of it." He led the old tailor to a hidden corner of the shop, opened a drawer, and revealed a roll of cloth.

"This," he said as he held up a swatch of the fabric, "came in a few days after your wife purchased the new textiles and cloth that arrived from the pier. I saved this for you."

The old tailor smiled with gratitude and examined the cloth. On the surface, it looked ordinary, but as he took one end of the cloth and wrapped it around his arm, the rest of its length puddled on the floor, and the tailor immediately felt the warmth of unending comfort. He raised the cloth to the morning light that seeped through the store windows. It dazzled him. It shimmered in brilliant colors. Testing the fabric's durability, he crumpled it and stretched it. He knew it would last ages. Delighted at such a unique discovery, he rolled the cloth into a ball and threw it up in the air. With no help from wind or air, it flew and reached the store's high ceiling. It unfurled itself, four meters in length and three meters wide. Suspended by some invisible force, it hovered above the old tailor and the Chinese merchant for a few seconds until gravity took over. Then slowly, like a feather tired from the wind's tossing and turning spells, it fell softly on the old tailor's shoulders and outstretched arms.

The tailor's heart burst with joy. He could not wait to show his wife this wonderful discovery. Realizing the value of such a precious weave, his excitement fleeted quickly as he realized that even all of his savings would not be enough to acquire the treasure.

The Chinese merchant read his mind. "Pay me when you have the money. This fabric was meant for you and you alone."

The old tailor bowed deeply with the kind of gratitude rarely seen on an ordinary day. The tailor ran all the way home and went straight to his workshop. He laid the cloth on his working table. He took out his tape measure, his tailor's chalk, and his shears, placing them on the table. He uncoiled the tape measure and called his wife to help him.

Grinning from ear to ear, the old tailor cried, "It is here! I have found it!"

His wife took the roll of cloth and examined it carefully. The old tailor expected his wife's expression to change from curiosity to amazement, but it did not.

"This is just like any cloth or textile from Po Xie Ho's store," she said to him, clearly unimpressed. She thought her husband had lost his eye for quality and his ability to appreciate aesthetics. She hoped that the cloth was indeed as beautiful as a rainbow, as strong as steel, as soft as the wind, and as warm as a blanket for a cold, cold night. But it was not.

"Well," he said, trying hard to hide his disappointment, "at least I can make something new out of it for myself."

"I only want you to be presentable to your clients and customers." She said defensively. "You are, after all, the best tailor in town."

He looked at his wife and lovingly marveled at her steely devotion to faith and family. In his eyes, she was still as beautiful as the young girl he met in the town fiesta years ago when he was only a settling migrant in the little, pompous town of Santa Ana.

"Come here," he beckoned. "There's much to spare for me. I'll first make you a fine Sunday dress."

Without hesitation, she allowed her husband to take her measurements. Then he went to work. The whole house was filled with the old tailor's busy sounds.

Snip. Snip. Snip!

Snap. Snap. Snap!

Stitch. Statch. Stitch. Statch!

Stitch. Stitch. Statch!

Kata-kata-kush! Kata-kata-kush!

After a day and a night, he had sewn his wife a new dress for Sunday mass. When the old tailor presented her the dress, she tried it on. It was a simple cut, almost austere. But as she gazed at her reflection, she beamed with a loveliness she had long forgotten. She turned to her husband and gave him a kiss.

The old tailor was resting on his favorite armchair by the window when he saw his young son and his son's friends walking to the fields. The four of them clutched their kites made of Japanese paper. The old tailor smiled and gazed lovingly at his son, who was laughing with his friends. *How swiftly time flies*, the old tailor thought. It was only yesterday when he cradled his son and rocked him to sleep. How light and small he was.

Hurriedly, the old tailor opened the window and called for his boy. In no time, he was measuring a pair of pants for his only 10-year-old son, who would soon grow to be a man.

"Wow!" his son exclaimed at the sight of the cloth. "Imagine the kites I could make with this, father!"

The old tailor chuckled. "I would rather use it for clothes than kites. I am supposed to put sew a shirt and work pants for myself from this cloth, but there is much to spare. I'll first make you a pair of pants!"

Then the tailor went to work. The whole house was filled with the old tailor's busy sounds.

Snip. Snip. Snip!

Snap. Snap. Snap!

Stitch. Statch. Stitch. Statch!

Stitch. Stitch. Statch!

Kata-kata-kush! Kata-kata-kush!

After a day and a night, he had sewn his son a new pair of pants. When the old tailor presented his son the pair of pants, the boy tried them on. They were so light. They clung to him like a second skin. He pranced and jumped and ran around the room. Flapping his arms, he felt like he could fly. He would run races with his friends, and he would best them all, he thought. Turning to his father, the boy wrapped his arms around the tailor and hugged him tightly.

Tired but happy, he went to the kitchen to forage. There he met his wife and daughter, busily preparing breakfast.

His daughter greeted him. "You've been up all night again, father. Come, breakfast is almost ready!"

He sighed contentedly and lovingly marveled at his daughter, who, at the threshold of adulthood, looked every inch like her mother at her age. He treasured the memory of seeing his daughter glow in her First Communion dress. But now she was blossoming. He knew that his daughter would soon have gentlemen callers. There would be parties to go to and debuts to attend. Right after breakfast, he measured his daughter for a coming-out party dress.

"But there will be little left of the cloth for you, father," his daughter said with hesitation.

"Hush, now," The tailor replied. "There will be plenty for me." Then he went to work. The whole house was filled with the old tailor's busy sounds.

Snip. Snip. Snip!

Snap. Snap. Snap!

Stitch. Statch. Stitch. Statch!

Stitch. Stitch. Statch!

Kata-kata-kush! Kata-kata-kush!

After a day and a night, he had made his daughter a dress for her coming-out party. When the old tailor presented his daughter the party dress, she tried it on. She was as radiant as the dawn. She turned sideways, left and right, peering into the mirror. She could not believe how stunning she looked in the dress. She blushed and went to her father, giving him an affectionate embrace.

The old tailor looked around his messy workshop. He picked up what was left of the cloth. He laid them down on his table and started to work. The whole house was filled with the old tailor's busy sounds.

Snip. Snip. Snip!

Snap. Snap. Snap!

Stitch. Statch. Stitch. Statch!

Stitch. Stitch. Statch!

Kata-kata-kush! Kata-kata-kush!

After a minute and an hour, he made himself a nice little handkerchief from the cloth that was as beautiful as a rainbow, as strong as steel, as soft as the wind, and as warm as a blanket on a cold, cold night.

MAKAYA AND MAGBOLOTO: A VISAYAN TALE OF THE CELESTIAL MAIDEN

Samar, Eastern Visayas Region

Story Note: The story of the Celestial Maiden has many versions from many places and regions in the archipelago. There exists a version told by the Ifugaos and the Igorots of the Cordillera and Mountain Province (Luzon) that speak of Lumawig and Bangan, being the daughters of Kamdali, the first Celestial Maiden, who taught the Ifugaos and the Igorots the songs and chants they sing, even to this day. What makes the story of the Celestial Maiden amazing is its existence in other Southeast Asian countries.

In the mountain where Magboloto lived, there was a majestic waterfall that fed the river leading to the sea. It was a place of amazing beauty, and people from the nearby village would go there often to bathe. Magboloto would pass by the falls and down to the river on his usual hunting route every now and then. He would stop and sit on a big rock for lunch or a snack. There he would play his flute to the delight of children bathing and women washing the household's garments.

What Magboloto did not know was how his music affected other inhabitants of the mountain. Even flora and fauna listened intently every time he played his flute. They seemed to understand the desires and stirrings of this young man's heart and soul.

One day, as Magboloto was on his way down the mountain after an unsuccessful hunt, he made his usual stop at the big rock by the river. A short distance away, the waterfalls churned, splashed, and gushed water from the side of the mountain. As he put his flute to his mouth, he heard lilting laughter.

Could it be a child's laughter? he thought. But the sound was so musical, as melodious as the note from his flute. Curious, he followed the sound. Standing good distance away, he saw seven beautiful maidens, shining like stars, bathing in he river. Stashed nearby were the maidens' gossamer robes. He quickly hid behind a boulder. Then his hunter's instincts took over. Magboloto slowly crawled to the rock where the robes were draped. He stashed one inside his hunting bag. He went back to his hiding place, where he waited patiently.

One by one, the maidens finished bathing. They wore their robes, rose from the ground, and took flight to the heavens. It was a magnificent sight! Magboloto's heart was bursting with excitement. At last, the youngest of the maidens remained looking for her robe. She cried for help, but her sisters had flown too far to return to earth.

The young maiden went back to the river for another swim in search of her missing robe. When she surfaced, her face was filled with fear and misery. Confused, there was nothing else left for her to do but cry.

Magboloto left his hiding place to comfort the maiden.

"Do not be afraid," he said gently, reaching for her. "I will not harm you."

She withdrew. Etched on her face was the fear Magboloto saw on animals before a kill. He untied the knot of his *alampay*, his kerchief, that wound around his waist like a belt. He unfurled it and offered the garment to the maiden. She took it and wore the *alampay* around her body.

I am Magboloto. Come. I will not harm you," Magboloto said as he stretched an open hand. Still, she did not trust him. Magboloto brought out his flute. He played her a soft lullaby that reminded her of the song she and her sisters sing to the moon and the stars.

What creature is this that knows the music of the heavens? she thought. When he finished, he smiled at her and reached for her hand. She took his. It was firm and warm.

"Makaya," she whispered her name to Magboloto.

Magboloto took care of Makaya. He taught her how to plant and harvest. He showed her where to find pheasant eggs and places where herbs grow and flourish. In time, Makaya learned the ways of human life and activity. During their trips to the mountain together, Magboloto avoided the route to the falls, afraid that Makaya might remember that fateful day when she lost her gossamer robe or that she might meet her sisters again bathing in the river. The robe was well hidden behind the bamboo walls of Magboloto's house.

Years passed, and they had a child. One day, while Makaya was putting the baby to sleep, she saw cobwebs in between the bamboo walls of their bedroom. With a *walis tambo*, a reed broom, she tried to sweep away the cobwebs, but they would not come off. She pushed the bamboo wall, and it opened, slightly enough to reveal her gossamer robe. She put on her robe, kissed her sleeping child on the forehead, and flew up to the heavens. Tears ran down her cheeks in a mixture of emotion. She was joyful that she would see her sisters again, hurt that Magboloto had been dishonest, and sad to leave her child. This thought crushed her heart into a thousand pieces.

When Magboloto learned of his wife's flight, he took their baby to a relative and began his journey to win back his wife. He climbed the mountain and there called upon the winds for help. None of the winds—North, South, East, or West—knew where the heavenly maidens lived. Magboloto wept bitterly at the loss of his wife. He begged the winds once more for clues. Sadly, they could not offer him any answers.

Magboloto looked down on the valley. He remembered the many days Makaya walked its fertile ground. Now, she was out of sight, out of his reach. Moved by remorse, he played his flute. A melancholy melody caressed the mountain air with his regret. The animals all around were moved by Magboloto's sadness. On the last note, he saw a giant bird, an eagle as big as his house. It had a wingspan of 20 feet and was flying toward him.

"I know where the celestial maidens live," the eagle told him. "Ride on my back. I will bring you there."

They came upon a castle sitting atop a cloud. The eagle brought him to Makaya's grandmother, where he begged to see Makaya. The grandmother refused his request, reminding Magboloto that he took Makaya as his wife through his deceit.

"It was wrong. I admit it. I am filled with remorse. I love Makaya. We have a child," Magboloto confessed.

The grandmother stared at Magboloto. She had seen men and knew their cunning ways. She said to him, "You need to complete several labors if you wish to win my granddaughter back."

"I will do anything I need to do have her by my side again, celestial grandmother," Magboloto cried.

"You are brave but foolish human," she laughed. "These are your three labors. The first one is to empty these three jars of its contents. Each has a million sesame seeds. Dry these out under the sun and put them back equally in each jar. Second, hull 100 bushels of rice overnight. By dawn, you should be finished with the task. Lastly, chop down all the trees on the right side of the mountain. There are around a hundred thousand trees the last time I counted. You will find everything you need at the foot of the mountain. Go, human! Prove yourself worthy!"

Magboloto rode the eagle's back to the foot of the mountain. Indeed, there were three jars of sesame seed that lay untouched. In the morning, he began the first task. It was not difficult to spread the sesame seeds out to the sun. Magboloto's problem was gathering the seeds in equal amounts back to the jar. Patiently, he waited for the seeds to dry. While he did, he played his flute. It was a happy tune about hard work and perseverance. For a while, he forgot about the meticulous work of counting the sesame seeds one by one. He played on and on until he could see the seeds, browning in the heat. At last, they were dry.

Just as he was about to pick one tiny sesame seed to put in the first jar, one by one the seeds marched on its own accord to the jar. He kneeled down on the ground and saw ants carrying one seed each. There were hundreds, thousands, even millions of them! In joyful gratitude, he played a song for them in celebration of their hard work and perseverance. In no time, the task was done!

Next, Magboloto ran to a nearby rice field where he needed to hull 100 bushels of rice. By this time, he had figured out that his flute's music had magical properties. He played a marching song. Rats and mice emerged from holes and burrows. They lugged and hulled the bushels of rice inside a granary. The rats and mice were quick to separate the chaff from the grain. By midnight, Magboloto had stopped playing his flute as the last bushel of rice went into the granary.

He prepared for the last task to be done at sunrise. At the rooster's first crow, Magboloto rose and stretched. He ate what little provision he had tucked inside his small bamboo backpack. Then he traveled to the right side of the mountain, determined to finish the last task. Upon reaching the place, he put the flute to his lips and played a swelling song that reached a teetering cadence. Boars and wild pigs, hundreds of them, left their hiding places. They felled the trees with their pointed tusks, strong skulls, and sharp teeth. The last task was done by midday.

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!" cried Magboloto to the ants, to the rats and mice, and to the boars and wild pigs that helped him.

With a song from his flute, the eagle came to bring him back to the above of the Celestial Grandmother, in the high heavens. She was waiting for him.

"Celestial Grandmother, I did as you commanded. I cannot lie. I had help from my flute some animal friends on earth." He tried to hide the excitement in his voice.

"That was smart, human, very smart," she said with a serious look on her face. Then, with a deep sigh, she said, "Very well. My word is my honor. I expect the same from you, Magboloto. Go home now and you will find your heart's desire."

Magboloto flew down from the heavens, riding on the mighty eagle's back. He thanked the eagle when they reached his front yard.

"I hope you learned your lesson from all of this, my friend," the eagle said to him. It turned and stretched its wings. With its strong legs, it sprang and took flight until it was a fading dot in the sky.

Magboloto walked to his door, where, upon entering, he caught the fragrant scent of cooked rice and *adobo*, the delicious stewed chicken dish his wife always made. In the bedroom, Makaya was putting the baby to sleep. She was as beautiful as the day she found her bathing in the river.

MARIANG ISDA: A VISAYAN CINDERELLA

Leyte, Eastern Visayas Region

Story Note: The story of Cinderella is a story found in every corner of the world. It seems that every culture has its own version. "Abadeha" is a popular Cinderella version from Cebu. The "Abadeha" version closely resembles the European versions of Perrault. It has been used in many theater plays and puppet shows in Manila and in progressive cities in Luzon and Visayas. Here is a little-known Visayan Cinderella story from Leyte where Maria, the identified Cinderella in the tale, has an unlikely redeemer.

Maria's mother died when she was 12 years old. She and her father lived in a little *nipa* hut, a bamboo house on stilts, near the sea. Since she was only a child, her father decided to remarry.

Unfortunately, her father married a cruel woman. Maria's stepmother made her do house chores. Maria's stepmother said the chores were for character development and discipline. Maria's father did not contradict his second wife. In front of Maria's father, his second wife was a strict but doting stepmother to Maria. Behind his back, she was wicked woman.

The stepmother would punish Maria for every mistake and failure. She made her kneel on salt for hours on end when she accidentally broke a plate or a glass. If Maria forgot to fill the *banga*, the water jar, with drinking water from the well, the stepmother would give Maria only boiled rice sprinkled with salt for lunch. Maria was often sent on errands into town. If Maria returned late, her stepmother would beat her with a bamboo stick. She forbade Maria to play with other children or to have pets.

The Philippines, being an archipelago, is abundant with fish markets. Popular tourist destinations like Panglao Island in Bohol and Boracay offer an array of exotic fish dishes.

At night, Maria wanted to hug her father and sleep beside him. This too was taken away. Maria's stepmother made it a point to distance Maria's father from her. Maria often cried herself to sleep. But no matter how her stepmother treated her, she awoke each morning filled with hope that a world beyond the seas awaited her.

After many years, Maria learned how to live with her stepmother's wicked ways and her father's silent acceptance of their lot. It seemed that fishing and a companionship were the only things that mattered to him. When Maria turned 16, she blossomed into beautiful young woman.

People began to notice her. Young men from the barrio would come calling but her stepmother was their biggest obstacle. The stepmother hid Maria from sight, relegating her to house chores during the day. She was allowed to come out only at dusk. Maria would walk by the beach enjoying the rare freedom afforded her by her stepmother, who watched nearby.

"This is better," Maria often told herself, "than not being given any chance to see the sun set on the horizon."

One day, her stepmother and father left for town. An unexpected storm arose. Maria barred the doors and windows and stayed at home until the passing of the storm. When all was quiet outside, she explored the shore to find out what the storm had left in its wake. She was surprised to see a big, silver fish awashed on the beach. She approached the fish and realized that it was still alive. She picked it up and gently laid the fish in shallow waters.

The fish wiggled and wriggled in the water. It circled around Maria's legs. Then it jutted its head out of the water and began to speak.

"Thank you, Maria! I knew you would help me," the fish said.

"You speak!" Maria squealed in surprise.

"Yes. I have been watching you a long time." The fish swam swiftly away and disappeared.

Maria wondered where it went. A few minutes passed, and the fish resurfaced. In its mouth was a lump of seaweed. The fish spat the seaweed at Maria's legs. In an instant, the scars from previous wounds and beatings vanished. The bruises that covered her arms were instantly healed. She bent down and embraced the fish.

"Thank you! Thank you!" Maria cried.

The fish shook itself free and swam back out to sea. When it returned, it held a big pearl in its mouth. Maria laid her palm in the water. The fish dropped the pearl into her hand. It was the most beautiful gift she had ever received. She marveled at the ivory ball resting in the palm of her hand. The more she looked at it, the more it dazzled. Like magic, the pearl illuminated the blue sea and green islands where she lived.

But then she saw a different landscape—mountains stretched from east to west, a body of water trapped inland, forests of green and fields of gold. These were not images of the place she grew up in. She held the pearl close to her breast, and it pulsated with a life of its own. She looked at it once more, and it was shining as bright as the sun!

"Maria!" A sharp cry broke her joyful reverie. It was her stepmother running toward her from the shore. Her father followed a few steps behind.

"What are you doing out there, stupid girl? Come back here!" her stepmother yelled in anger.

Maria shook her head. "No. I'm not going back!" she retorted. Maria had finally found the courage to speak up for herself. The fish swam nearby. She kept the pearl close to her breast.

"I am leaving, Father," Maria looked at her father as tears ran down her cheeks. "You've always known of Stepmother's cruelty, Father, yet you never protected me. You stood by and did nothing."

Maria's father could only sob in bitterness and regret while her stepmother looked enviously at the light in her palm. Maria turned her back and walked into the water until it reached her waist. She took a deep breath and dove into the salty water accompanied by the big, silver fish. The bright, shiny pearl was clasped tightly in her hand. Maria and the silver fish disappeared into the indigo waters of the ocean, never to be seen on that island again.

MARIANG MAKILING AND THE GOLDEN GINGER ROOT

Calamba, Laguna, Southern Tagalog Region

Story Note: In Calamba, Laguna, there stands a magical mountain known as Makiling. It is enchanted because legends say that two deities, Gat Panahon and Dayang Makiling, lived in the mountain ages ago. They were both responsible for the flourishing flora and fauna on the mountain. Their daughter, Maria, aided them in taking care of the mountain's inhabitants, including man. The deities were generous to both beasts and humans. When Maria fell in love with a mortal, the deities did not interfere. The mortal, however, was a fickle-minded man. He left Maria at the altar and was never seen again. Maria was inconsolable. Old people say that the deities, Gat Panahon and Dayang Makiling, left the mountain and went back to their enchanted world, leaving Maria to take care of the mountain. Some believe that Maria left with them as well. However, there are abundant tales about her continued dwelling on the mountain. Many variants of this tale exist. In this version, Mariang Makiling's devotion and generosity to mortals leaves her bitter and frustrated in the end.

Mariang Makiling's ginger plantation was wide and large. Her ginger was not your ordinary ginger. The moment they were plucked out of the soil, they turned into gold.

Maria was very careful about gifting these ginger roots. She once made a wrong judgment, entrusting her heart to a mortal man. She did want to make the same mistake twice.

One day, a young man came hunting. His arrow felled a doe dear to Maria. When she learned of this, she immediately raced to the scene of the hunt. The young man was awed by the sight of her. She was luminous!

Mount Makiling is a national park where people picnic and camp throughout the year. It is bordered by two provinces, Laguna and Batangas, where Mariang Makiling's legend is very popular.

"Why did you take an innocent life?" she asked the young man.

He trembled in fear. He knelt on the ground and cried. "My father is very sick. Our crops have been withering for months. My mother comes home tired to the bone from working in the fields. I am frightened as to what will become of my family."

Maria's heart ached for the young man. She knew what loss felt like. "This doe you killed has a family too. Her family dwells in the heart of this forest. Care for her fawns for three moons, and I will look after your family. If you satisfy this request, I will give you something that will save you and your poor family."

The young man did as he was told. He looked after the fawns until they were big enough to venture on their own in the forest. While he took care of the fawns, Maria looked after his family. Like magic, the young man's dry field produced *kamote* (sweet potatoes), corn, potatoes, cabbages, *sitaw* (green beans), and *ampalaya* (balsam apples). The fruit trees that grew nearby bore fruit—lanzones, *rambutan* (sweet red fruit covered with spikes), *duhat* (black palm), *kalamansi* (small citrus fruit), and *dayap* (lime). His mother and sister harvested the crops and sold them at the market. For the first time in many months, they had something to eat. They also had enough money to buy medicine for their sick father. The young man could not believe it. He was deeply grateful for Maria's ever-flowing generosity.

At the agreed-upon time, Maria appeared to the young man at the same spot where the doe died. In her hand, she held one nugget of ginger. It was golden, like the sun.

The young man marveled at the ginger root, for he had never seen anything like it. Maria said, "You have done your part to redeem yourself. Now, I give you this golden ginger root out of my sympathy for your family. Plant the ginger root, and it will grow a hundredfold. You can sell them and earn money as a result of your hard work. Spend it wisely but never tell anyone how you acquired the ginger root or who gave this gift to you. That is my only condition."

The young man accepted the gift and thanked Maria. His heart was filled with joy, and he could hardly wait to tell his family. When he arrived home, he saw his sister waiting for him. There was a sour look on her face.

"Look, I have a golden ginger root!" the young man cried.

"It is pretty! But what good will it do us?! We need food and money!"

"We can plant this root, and when we harvest the ginger crop, we can sell them at the market!"

"That's hard work!" his sister replied.

"That's what the lady in the mountain told me. We'll have money to spend for food and father's medicine if we labor."

"That is just foolish!" His sister grabbed the ginger root from his hands and told every neighbor about her brother's golden ginger root. Soon, almost every one in the *barangay*, the neighborhood, knew of the golden ginger root. The following morning, people gathered at the plaza and trooped toward the mountain.

They brought trowels, shovels and pikes. They had *itak* (bolos) and axes. They were off to dig for the golden ginger root. The villagers were merciless. They dug deep into the earth, uprooting plants and damaging trees. The animals, especially the birds, were frightened. They cut down the trees and kept on digging. They destroyed the springs and water wells of the mountain looking for the golden ginger root.

Finally, tired, spent, and unsuccessful, they went back to the young man. His sister called for him. "You are a fool, brother! You made me look like a fool!" She shouted, "Where is the gold? Where is the lady of the mountain?"

"Here I am!" a cry of anger pierced the sky.

It was Mariang Makiling, carried by the mountain clouds. Her face contorted in anger. The people were frightened and amazed at the sight of her. In her arms, she cradled hundreds of golden ginger root.

"You have destroyed the mountain that my parents cared for since time began! It was wrong for me to stay. So I will leave with what you want, greedy people!"

She stepped off the clouds and threw the golden ginger root to the trembling people. They scampered for the nuggets. But as it touched their hands, the ginger's luster disappeared!

"The golden qualities of the ginger root are now lost to your touch, selfish mortals! You will labor until the day you earned just enough for what you need. You will never be content!" Maria turned her back on them and stepped back on the clouds. It lifted her to the skies.

She flew back to the mountain and never appeared again to any mortal. Every now and then, hunters and hikers who explore the mountain hear a woman singing a beautiful song or catch a fading glimpse of a lady walking in the woods, bathed in golden light. The explorers give chase, but the song and the vision always vanish in the mountain mist.

MINGGAN AND MARIANG SINUKUAN

Nueva Ecija, Central Luzon Region

Story Note: Like the benevolent Mariang Makiling who dwells in Mount Makiling, Mariang Sinukuan is her counterpart from Mount Arayat. Arayat is a lone mountain that stands in the middle of the rice plains of Central Luzon. It is surrounded by the Candaba Swamp and the provinces of Pampanga and Nueva Ecija. The source of this folktale is a native woman from Nueva Ecija as she heard it from an old woman retelling it at a wake.

Mariang Makiling was the daughter of the sun god, Sinukuan. In a battle with Apung Pinatubo, he was defeated and imprisoned in Arayat. From then on, his daughter Maria took care of the mountain and its dwellers. Be it flora, fauna, beast, or man, Mariang Sinukuan was a kind and generous *diwata* (fairy) to all its living creatures.

Minggan, the giant, was in love with Mariang Sinukuan. She, however, did not return his affection. She was dedicated to caring for nature and its wildlife. To stall his advances, she gave Minggan a test in the hopes that he would stop pursuing her.

"Minggan, my love is for nature and the living creatures who depend on it," Mariang Sinukuan told him one day when he visited her on Mount Arayat.

"I will take care of them as well because I love you!" Minggan professed.

Mariang Sinukuan sighed. "Very well. I shall marry you when you succeed in building a dam on the Pampanga River. It floods during heavy rains, leading to a destruction of crops and life on the mountain as well as its surrounding *barangays* (neighborhoods)."

"I can do it!" Minggan replied confidently.

"You have until dawn to work on the dam. If you are successful, then I will marry you." Then she left.

True to his word, Minggan went to work. He was a mighty giant from Dilamanok of the east. He gathered rocks and boulders and piled them one on top of the other in a spot where the river cut between two mountains. He worked all night long to finish his appointed task on time. Before daybreak, he was sure that the dam would be finished. He was hopeful, and his love for Mariang Sinukuan was his great motivation.

Unbeknownst to him, Mariang Sinukuan had been receiving reports from the patrolling bats. She was monitoring Minggan's progress all night long. When she learned that Minggan's work was nearly done, she asked the rooster to crow hours before dawn.

When Minggan heard the rooster's crow, he was heartbroken. Thinking that he had failed, he turned away and left the pile of rocks. He was never seen again.

Mariang Sinukuan never married and remained the guardian of Mount Arayat.

MANGGAO AND MARIA CACAO

Cebu, Central Visayas Region

Story Note: In the old town of Argao, Cebu, there stands a mountain by the name of Lantoy. It had, as legend tells, a diwata, *or fairy, dwelling in its territory by the name of Maria Cacao. Manggao, the giant who dwelled with Maria, is known for pushing her golden galleon down the river and into the sea. This golden galleon contained hundreds of* tablea, *round chocolate tablets used to flavor* sikwate, *a chocolate drink, and* champorado, *a chocolate porridge. The story goes that Manggao, the giant of Mount Lantoy, befriended humans. These humans would later on become servants of Maria Cacao on her magical cacao plantation found near the foot of Mount Lantoy.*

One day, a young boy was bathing in the river. Swimming upriver, he saw by the riverbank huge footsteps that led to a cave. Curious, he followed the footsteps and stood at the entrance of the cave. The cave looked ancient. He was scared to enter it.

He turned his back to leave, but when he did, he came face-to-face with two enormous legs. They belonged to Manggao, the giant! The boy looked up and was so frightened that he soiled his pants.

Pictured are cacao pods. *Sikwate* is a chocolate drink made from pure chocolate tablets. Chocolate is also used in a common rice porridge called *champorado*. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

"I will not harm you," the giant said. "Come with me. I have something for you!"

The boy hoped that he would be given gold, for he had seen traders in the market exchange it with different products from overseas. He would become rich indeed if he received gold. So he went inside the cave with Manggao.

With a flick of his fingers, Manggao produced a flame that danced in his palm. Using the light from the flame, he led the boy down a rocky path to an underground river. The ceiling of the cave reminded the boy of the big church in town. He was amazed to come upon a large ship made of solid gold floating on the river. Big crates of cacao were being hauled to the ship by servants.

"We will sell the cacao when the rains come," Manggao told the boy. "Now I will introduce you to Maria."

Manngao led the boy to a winding stone path where a small opening could be seen. "Climb up the rocky steps and go through that small opening. You will find Maria."

The boy followed Manggao's directions. When he reached the opening, an orchard of cacao trees welcomed him. He took in air and smelled the sweet aroma of the cacao fruit. He heard lilting laughter. He turned to where the sound originated and saw a beautiful woman with long black hair, big round eyes, and a smile that was as warm as the summer sun. It was the *diwata*, the fairy, Maria Cacao!

She greeted him. "So my husband brought me a young boy this time. Tell me, where are you from?"

"I am from Argao, down by the mountain," the boy replied.

"I have been there many times. People there seem to enjoy my cacao fruit," she said. "You are too young to work in my orchard, but for your courage, I have something to give you."

Maria Cacao picked one cacao fruit from a nearby tree.

"Give me your hands, boy," she commanded.

The boy, mesmerized, offered both of his hands.

Maria Cacao placed the fruit in the palm of his hands. She covered it with hers and told the boy to close his eyes. She whispered so many magical words that it was difficult for the boy to remember them.

At last, she said, "Open your eyes!"

When he did, he was back in the front yard of his house. He held in his hands the cacao fruit and a dark round tablet. He ran to his mother and breathlessly told her of his great adventure by the river, of the giant who took him inside the cave, and of the *diwata* who gifted him with the fruit and the tablet. Amazingly, he remembered what to do with the chocolate tablet and the cacao fruit.

This was how the first cacao tree grew outside the enchanted cacao plantation of Maria Cacao. The people of Argao, Cebu, cultivated the fruit and from it learned how to make *tablea*, the chocolate tablet.

THE MAYOR WHO HAD TWO HORNS

Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Region

There was once a town mayor who had problems as big as his town. He did not know what to do because his townsfolk were so unruly, disregarding his laws and legislation.

One night, while sitting on a rattan armchair on his veranda, he saw a shooting star flash across the sky. It was big and bright. He wished out loud, "Star that travels in the night, give me two horns to use for fright!" The mayor thought that growing two horns would make him a better leader. Horns would mean authority and terror. He would appear very powerful indeed! Days passed, and nothing happened, so he dismissed the experience. Deep in his heart, though, his craving for power increased day after day.

One day, he felt a terrible pain on top of his head. The pain slithered down both sides of his head, like a writhing snake, until it covered his whole head. It drove him mad. He called for the doctor, who came immediately to the mayor's house. The doctor gave the mayor pain medication.

The doctor said, "You are much too busy with work. The pressure of your job is causing this pain. Take a week's rest and call me again if the pain persists."

The mayor took his doctor's advice. That night, while combing his hair, he saw two lumps growing on top of his head. Instead of being frightened, he laughed in triumph. His wish had come true!

The bamboo is a versatile plant that can be used for building materials, food, and other cultural and aesthetic purposes. Its hollow stem is useful for cooking and as a receptacle of food and liquids.

In the morning, the mayor called for the barber to give him a haircut. He gave the barber specific instructions on his new hairstyle. The mayor wanted the lumps to be visible so that his horns would grow unimpeded. He wanted them to show. The barber thought it was insane and did not understand, in the first place, how the mayor came to have two lumps growing on top of his head. The barber had no choice but to follow his customer's orders.

"What did you see on top of my head?" the mayor asked after the barber finished.

"Two lumps, my dear mayor," the barber replied.

"What you saw here must stay here," the mayor ordered the barber, "or else, I shall have you beheaded!"

"I gave my word, my dear mayor." The barber left the mayor's office in a hurry. When he reached his humble home, he did not tell his wife what happened in the mayor's office.

The following day, the barber was surprised to see a messenger from the mayor. He was being called again. His wife was perplexed. She asked what was wrong, but the barber merely shrugged his shoulders and went with the messenger. When the barber arrived, he saw that two enormous horns, like a carabao's horns, protruded from the top of the mayor's head. The barber shook in fear. The mayor looked like a monster.

"Shave off my hair, barber!" the mayor commanded, "and do not tell a soul about this!" He pointed at his two big horns.

The mayor continued, "In time, I will reveal myself to the public and the people of this town will fear me. They will blindly follow my commands no matter what! Bwahahaha!" The horned mayor threw his head back, laughing and relishing the thought of the utter control he would possess.

The mayor's obsession with power transformed his appearance. He grew hideous, inside and out. With shaking hands, the dutiful barber shaved the mayor's head, showcasing the sharp horns. When he was finished, he gave the mirror to his client.

"Now I look like the devil!" the mayor shook with delirious laughter.

The barber cowered in fear. He had known the mayor as an eccentric man, but this was beyond bizarre. It repulsed the barber to see his mayor in this condition.

The mayor ordered, "You will never tell to anyone what you have witnessed. If you betray me, I will hang you in the gallows and let your remains dance in the wind for days!"

"Y-eee-eess . . . my d-d-d-ear mayor," the barber squeaked.

"Leave! Leave now!" commanded the horned beast.

The barber quickly gathered his tools and ran all the way to his house. He did not enter his front door. Instead, he ran to the backyard, into a grove of bamboo. There, he dug a hole. Among the roots of the bamboo, he knelt. He cried and vomited the mayor's ugly secret and monstrous plan. He held on to the bamboo's strong reeds as he whispered every detail. Exhausted and spent, he slouched on the ground and covered the hole with the newly dug earth. Then he went to the *batalan*, a tall bamboo structure. From one of the *burnay* (clay) pots, he fetched water to wash the dirt from his hands.

That night, while the whole town slept, the barber's agony seeped through the roots of the bamboo. It crept up the bamboo shoots and into the leaves. By dawn, the entire bamboo grove had a secret to whisper to the wind. Early in the morning, when the wind rustled the bamboo leaves, the bamboo sang the secret of the mayor's transformation and the dark plan he had in store for his townspeople.

The wind carried this horrific news across town and greeted everyone at the breakfast table. It whispered to farmers who were working early in the fields. The wind circled around the plaza, down to the *panaderia*, the local bakery, and to the church. It reached the mayor's house. When he awoke, he thought he was dreaming.

The townspeople were frightened and verified the story with each other. "The mayor has grown two horns! He is as hideous as the devil! He is out to terrify and terrorize everyone in this town!"

So they gathered their knives, their *itak* (bolos), and bamboo spears. They stormed the mayor's house. Even the *kura paroko*, the parish priest, came with holy water.

The mayor heard thunderous footsteps approaching his house. He went out and opened his gate. He did indeed look as fearsome as the devil, but the townspeople had courage in their numbers and were prepared to slay him.

They attacked him with their knives, *itak*, and spears. They did not stop until the horned beast lie still on the ground. The townspeople burned his remains in a big fire. His ashes were spilled into the river, washing away to sea. The barber who saw it all was never the same man again.

BUTON THE MAGIC FROG

South Cotabato, Mindanao

Buton the magic frog chanted—

Rain! Rain! Rain!
Come down, oh!
Rain! Rain! Rain!
Make the plants grow-oh!
Kaaakak! Kaaakak! Kaaakak!

And rain it did. The plants grew so wild and thick, the vegetation became a forest. One day, Salandungoy climbed a betel nut tree. Buton the magic frog saw him. Buton the magic frog chanted—

Man! Man! Man!
Climbing that betel nut tree
Cover your bottom
I can see your red fanny!
Kaaakak! Kaaakak! Kaaakak!

Buton laughed. Salandungoy was offended. He climbed down from the tree and searched for the mischievous frog. Buton hopped and leaped. Salandungoy saw Buton hiding in the bushes. Stealthily creeping to where Buton was, Salandungoy captured the magic frog.

"I am going to eat you!" Salandungoy snapped.

"No!" Buton cried. "I can do magic. I can help you."

"Then prove it!" Salandungoy replied.

Buton, the magic frog chanted—

Betel nuts! Betel nuts!
All good for chewing
Drop down to earth
My friend needs stimulating!
Kaaakak! Kaaakak! Kaaakak!

One by one, betel nuts from the betel tree dropped, filling Salandungoy's basket. "Do you believe me now?" Buton asked Salandungoy.

"Thank you! Come!" Salandungoy held out a coconut shell. "Now, we are friends."

Buton jumped in Salandungoy's coconut shell. There, Buton felt safe. Salandungoy released Buton from the coconut shell upon reaching his field. Buton saw how neglected the field was. Weeds grew. Crops withered.

Buton, the magic frog sang—

Weeds! Weeds! Weeds!
Die-oh! Die-oh! Die-oh!
Crops! Crops! Crops!
Grow! Grow! Grow-oh!
Kaaakak! Kaaakak! Kaaakak!

The weeds withered. The crops grew. Salandungoy danced and jumped for joy!

Gamaw, Salandungoy's giant neighbor, witnessed what Buton could do. He crossed Salandungoy's field and picked up Buton with his big bare hands, without even asking permission.

"I need your frog to clear my field," Gamaw said brusquely. Then he ran away to his field.

Salandungoy ran after him shouting, "Do not hurt him! Please!"

Gamaw threw Buton on the ground. Buton saw that there were weeds growing thicker on Gamaw's field than Salandungoy's. More than this neglect, it was Gamaw's rude manners that Buton did not like. So Buton the magic frog sang—

Weeds! Weeds! Weeds!
Grow! Grow! Grow!
Crops! Crops! Crops!
Die-oh! Die-oh! Die-oh!
Kaaakak! Kaaakak! Kaaakak!

The weeds grew. The crops died. Nothing was left but dry earth. In anger, Gamaw whipped Buton with a stick. He maimed the poor, magic frog. Not satisfied, Gamaw bashed Buton to death with a stone.

Salandungoy was too late to stop Gamaw. In his fear of the giant, he merely wept for the magic frog that helped him harvest the betel nuts and made his fields flourish.

Gamaw further mocked Salandingoy's misery by eating Buton. When he was done, he spat the magic frog's bones on the ground. Salandungoy gathered Buton's bones and sobbed even more. Gamaw laughed and walked away.

Salandungoy went home. He cleaned Buton's bones. From these, he fashioned a comb for his unruly, curly hair. When he was done, he used it to comb his hair. Magically, his hair straightened. He looked handsome. When Gamaw found out, he went to Salandungoy and terrorized his neighbor once more. Using the comb for his own hair, Gamaw broke it into small pieces. Instead of looking handsome like Salandungoy, Gamaw went bald. His hair fell to the ground until no strand was left on his head.

"Your frog has no use at all!" Gamaw bellowed.

"He was my friend. He was good to me," Salandungoy said quietly. Salandungoy picked the small pieces of the broken comb.

"What use are those bones? It made me lose my hair!" Gamaw screamed at Salandungoy.

"I could still use these as fish hooks," Salandungoy said.

Gamaw hurriedly retrieved the broken bones from the ground, leaving a couple of tiny pieces to Salandungoy. Gamaw ran back to his house to get a fishing line. When he found one, he went

down to the river and fished. A few moments, Salandungoy joined him. Quietly, they sat by the riverbank.

Salandungoy's line moved. He caught a big fish. He removed the hook from the fish's mouth and placed the fish in his basket. He threw his line back in the water. It moved, and he got a bigger fish. He threw the line a third time and caught the biggest catch of the day! Gamaw's line was never bitten.

Sour and angry, he approached Salandungoy's basket and took the biggest catch. He built a fire nearby to smoke the fish. Salandungoy covered his basket, fixed his fishing line, and kept the fishing hook. He walked back to his house, where he cleaned his catch and cooked the fish in open fire. It was delicious. He raised one morsel of fish in the air; thanked his friend Buton, the magic frog; and then ate the piece with gusto. He would treasure the fish hooks, a happy memory of Buton the magic frog, who had been good to him.

By the riverbank, Gamaw's body lay lifeless. An unfinished meal of smoked fish lay nearby. Gamaw's eyes were wide open. His tongue protruded out of his mouth. A small bone, the shape of a fishing hook, was lodged inside his throat.

ANG IBONG ADARNA (THE ADARNA BIRD)

National Capitol Region

A long time ago in the kingdom of Berbania, there ruled a great monarch named King Alfonso. He had three sons: Don Pedro, Don Diego, and Don Juan.

Don Pedro was the captain of the royal army. His primary job was to defend the kingdom from invaders. He was strong and cunning. He trained the soldiers day and night. They all stood their ground, on the alert for danger. He was a good leader.

Don Diego was a lawmaker. He was always with the wise men of the kingdom. He listened and sought counsel from the elders, especially during times when peace and order must rule the land. He was a steadfast decision maker.

And then there was Don Juan, the youngest of the three. Don Juan mingled, sang songs, and danced with the young people of the village. He listened to the stories of the old townsfolk and passed these on to the children of the kingdom. He was the consummate dreamer.

The Ibong Adarna is often mistaken for a folktale when, in fact, it is a corrido, a metrical romance. It brims with influences of Spanish Zarsuela and Filipino Balagtasan. The Adarna story has been retold and adapted countless times in television shows, movies, plays, and musicals. Many adaptations are published in book format for children to read and enjoy. The colorful costume you see in this photo represents the Adarna bird.

King Alfonso loved all three dearly, for they were living memories of his beautiful wife. One day, a strange wind blew upon the kingdom of Berbania. It whispered a malice that made the maidens tremble. It carried a heat that displeased the men. It snaked around the children and robbed them of their youthful zeal. The old people were frightened as well, for the passing wind reminded them of wars their forefathers fought decades ago. They braced themselves for what was to come. Fear enveloped their hearts.

On that fateful day, King Alfonso stood on top of a mountain overlooking Berbania. He felt the wind gaining speed and rapidly approaching. With one quick, sweeping flight, the wind stole the king's hope, faith, and love. Since that time, the kingdom of Berbania was never the same again.

The year's rice harvest was dismal. The carabaos became sickly. The chickens failed to lay eggs. The fields became barren. The rivers ran dry. It was the kingdom's granary that kept them alive for weeks. But very soon, it would be empty. To top it all, King Alfonso's health declined with a quickening pace. Since the day ill-bearing wind swept the kingdom, King Alfonso deteriorated. The doctors were perplexed. The wise men were confused. The three beloved princes did not know what to do. No medicine known to man could cure the king.

Then one day, an old woman requested an audience with the three princes. She spoke of a far-away mountain to the east, Mount Tabor. There stood a tree, Piedras Platas. It was beautiful, shining, and everlasting. It was where the magical bird, the Adarna, roosted.

"That story is the stuff of legends!" Don Pedro spat.

"It is but an old wives' tale. Old woman, do not waste our time. The King is sick and dying!" Don Diego exclaimed.

"Your Highnesses," the old woman started, "the Adarna may hold the cure to the king's ailing heart and weakening mind and body. It sings a melody that can cure all man's illnesses!"

"A child's bedtime story will not heal our father!" Don Pedro and Don Diego contradicted.

"My brothers, let us listen to what she has to say," Don Juan finally spoke. "What choice do we have? We must do whatever we can to help him."

The old woman looked eagerly at the youngest prince and saw a ray of light shine forth. She smiled, and a warm feeling enveloped her body.

Don Juan continued, "Legends become true when one believes. If this old wives' tale about the Adarna bird is the medicine that will cure our father, the great king, then I am a believer." He turned to the old woman. "Go on, grandmother. Continue your story."

With renewed confidence, she went on to say that only one person could make the quest. Everyone who previously attempted the feat failed. The old woman told them of the long journey. It would take weeks and danger that would await them at every curve. She warned them not to listen to beautiful song of the Adarna bird, for it would lull them to sleep and its droppings would turn a human to stone.

"It seems the Adarna is both a witch and a magician!" blurted Don Pedro.

"A creature that is both beautiful and lethal!" Don Diego uttered.

"Is there an antidote for these spells?" asked Don Juan.

"My apologies," said the old woman, who bowed her head, "I do not know. An old hermit lives in the mountain of Tabor. Perhaps he will know the answer to your question."

Don Pedro and Don Diego stopped listening, for their minds wandered to the Adarna bird and its capture. Don Juan, on the other hand, paid attention to the old woman and remembered to ask the same question should he meet the hermit on his way.

"I know I'm the youngest, my brothers, but I volunteer to search for the Adarna bird." Don Juan interrupted his brothers, whose conversation had broken into an argument.

Don Pedro laughed. "I have to admire the temerity of my brothers. As the eldest, it is my duty to catch the Adarna! Besides, I am the leader of our military."

Don Diego said, "I agree, but should you fail to return in a month, I will follow your path and save you from whatever suffering has befallen you."

"Fair enough," Don Pedro replied with a cocky smile.

"Then I will do the same should both of your quests fail," Don Juan said to his brothers.

Don Pedro stated, raising his sword and touching each of his brothers on their chests, "This is the pact that will save our father and this land. For the King! For Berbania!" The younger siblings did the same and began making plans should their brother fail to return.

The following day, Berbania bade good-bye to its crown prince, Don Pedro. He looked dashing and brave sitting atop his black stallion. His provisions were plenty. His confidence was strong and steadfast. The royal pigeon flew above him as he rode away. Don Juan suggested that his brother bring the messenger bird to send home word of his travels, and Don Pedro agreed. But nothing would deter him from this mission. The Adarna bird was his to bring home to the ailing king.

The first five days were uneventful. Then he fell upon hard times. On the seventh day, bandits stole most of his provisions. This he wrote down on a piece of parchment. He tied it around the pigeon's leg and sent it back to Berbania. During the second week, he encountered strange creatures. Mosquitoes bit him when he camped by a stagnant creek. A scorpion stung him on the ankle, and fever held him down for three days. He followed beautiful, exotic butterflies into a field of flowers. The floral smell made him nauseous until he vomited the entire contents of his stomach. During the third week, he depended on the wild for food.

It was at that time the pigeon returned to Don Pedro with a map drawn by the royal cartographer. Don Pedro discovered that was near a small village with a few miles more to go until he reached Mount Tabor. Along with the map, the pigeon carried three pieces of gold. His heart swelled with hope.

He used some of the gold to replenish his provisions and to buy weapons necessary to catch the Adarna bird. A beautiful and magical bird like the Adarna would be difficult to snare. Don Pedro stopped by a farmhouse and asked the farmer for a night's stay. The farmer generously offered a room. The farmer saw the emblem of Berbania emblazoned on Don Pedro's sash. The royal family's coat of arms was etched on his shield.

"My young prince, it is not my business but I am curious," the farmer started. "What brought you out here down the valley, far from the safety of your kingdom and into territories away from your king's jurisdiction?"

Don Pedro was suspicious. He kept his sword within reach.

"I am on royal business. I appreciate the lodging you are providing. I will leave immediately at dawn," he replied curtly.

The farmer nodded. "You can join us for dinner, my royal guest. It is nothing compared to the banquets of Berbania, but my daughter is a pretty good cook. She takes after her mother." The farmer's eyes twinkled.

Don Pedro was ashamed to have thought ill of the farmer. His journey had been tough. He was no longer in good physical condition, having slept outdoors for weeks and having depended on berries and herbs for sustenance. To refuse the farmer's invitation of breaking bread with his family would show utter disrespect. Don Pedro said, "I will be there momentarily. I must refresh and change, making myself presentable company for your home. Thank you very much."

There were three more people in the farmer's family: the eldest daughter, the middle son. and the youngest girl. The food was modest. There was corn soup, rice steamed in bamboo tubes, roasted chicken, and fish stewed in a sauce of herbs and spices. There were fruit on the table as well. For Don Pedro, this was a feast. The farmer told the truth. His eldest daughter was a very good cook indeed.

After dinner, the children cleaned the table and washed dishes in the kitchen. The farmer and the prince were still seated at the table, talking and relishing the meal they just consumed. Don Pedro could not believe how kindness and brutality could both exist in the same world. Just a few weeks ago, bandits robbed him on the road. Now, he was blessed with goodwill from strangers.

"I can never thank you enough, Ignacio," He said to the farmer. "This respite from my travel has lifted my spirits. I must now dismiss myself to your cowshed for I leave at dawn to travel to the mountain of Tabor."

"It is not often that we have a royal as guest in our home but we try our best to treat all of our guests with hospitality," he replied with pride.

"Yes, I understand. Once again, thank you." Don Pedro took out one piece of gold from his pocket and laid it on the table.

Ignacio the farmer was dumbstruck to see the gold on his humble wooden table. A rush of emotions flooded him. He found it difficult to speak.

Don Pedro stood up and left the house. He wrote down the events that happened since receiving the map. He described in detail the farmer, his house, his family, and the wonderful meal he shared with them. He told his brothers that in three days' time, he would soon reach Mount Tabor. Very soon, he wrote, he would have in his hands the Adarna Bird that could cure their father, the king. He tied the parchment to the royal pigeon's leg and sent it off to Berbania.

At dawn, Ignacio the farmer was up to bade his royal guest good-bye. He did not ask the prince any more questions but wished him luck on his quest and his journey to Tabor. Ignacio watched the prince rode away from his farm, down the road until he was a dot moving uphill toward the mountain.

Days passed, and the prince reached the foot of the mountain. He rested by a brook. He laid out his bread, water, and dried fruit on the grass and ate. He examined his map. The road ended exactly where he rested. The royal pigeon had not returned since it left three days ago. Anxiety and worry overcame him. He lost his appetite. He washed his face with water from the brook. When he dried himself, he saw an old man standing near his leftovers.

"Would you mind if I share your food?" the old man asked the prince.

Don Pedro gazed at him from head to foot. *Could this be the hermit that the old woman told them about?* The old man looked more like beggar than a mystical hermit.

"I am sorry but I have to decline your request. My journey is still a long way up the mountain to look for Piedras Platas. I need my provisions." He gathered his cup, bread, and fruit and stashed them away in his bag. The old man watched as the prince rode away. The prince could hear the grumbling of the man's stomach.

Don Pedro traveled for three more days. On the fourth day, he found a clearing that led to a meadow. In the middle of the meadow there stood a tree, beautiful, shining, and everlasting!

"Piedras Platas!" Don Pedro gasped.

There he waited. No bird perched on its branch. Finally, by sunset, he heard a soft flapping of wings. He searched the tree to find the Adarna bird, but it remained hidden. Then he heard a song—

My child, you are weary
From play, from work, from your journey
Rest my child and think of nothing
Tomorrow is but a dream

Let me cradle you as I used to do
My heart beats! It sings for you!
You are mine, my son, so dear
Come, allow me to hold you near

He listened, and tears sprang from his eyes. It was his mother's song. He missed his mother so much since she died years ago. He slumped to his knees, closed his eyes, and slept.

The song stopped. A bird alighted on the prince's shoulder. It flapped its wings and made a bird call. Its droppings landed on the prince's shoulder. Immediately, Don Pedro was turned to stone. The bird flew back up the tree, where it settled for the night. At dawn, it flew away toward the west.

Back in Berbania, the two princes, Don Diego and Don Juan, were wary of their brother's whereabouts. The royal pigeon came back a few days ago bearing a tassel from the headdress of Don Pedro's horse. It was a bad sign.

Worse, the king's condition remained the same as the day Don Pedro left. He drifted from sleep to wakefulness. He remained weak and ill.

"My turn has come, brother," Don Diego told his sibling.

"May Fate favor your journey. I wish you well," Don Juan replied and embraced his brother.

Don Diego set forth. He was more prepared than his older sibling. He paid attention to the letters Don Pedro sent from his journey. When he reached the road where Don Pedro met the bandits, he waited for them for a day and a half. When they met him, they attempted to rob him. But, strong and cunning, he defeated the bandits and sent word through the royal pigeon for the fastest rider the royal army could send.

If not for his brother pioneering the way, he would have befallen the same fate. Alas, he knew what to do in every turn and bend of the road. When he reached Igancio's farm, he realized why his brother wrote fondly of the old man.

Ignacio was an honest and kind man. He offered Don Diego the same hospitality and generosity that Don Pedro received.

"Only for an hour's rest, Ignacio," He told him. "Sunset is but several hours away. Besides, I am sturdier than my older brother!" He laughed.

"Well then, my prince, come and sit under the *narra* tree. I have asked my daughter to bring out some ginger ale. It is cool, for she brewed the ginger last night."

Ignacio led the prince to a bamboo bench under the *narra* tree.

The same question nagged the farmer, but he did not ask the prince. When the ale was served, Don Diego began a lively conversation. He told Ignacio how he defeated the bandits that came after his brother. He spoke about the possible death of the crown prince.

"I am not already sad just thinking about it. I hope it is not true, really," Don Diego said.

But Igancio saw a glint in his eyes that frightened him.

"If Pedro is dead, I would be next in line," Don Diego added and than drank his ale.

"From here onward, the roads are enchanted, young prince. Your brother may have lost his way. I hope you find him alive," Ignacio said.

"I do too." Don Diego nodded.

Don Diego told the farmer what had been going on in Berbania for the past months.

Ignacio responded, “That is terrible news. I’m sorry to say that, unfortunately, no one has returned to these roads bearing news of the Adarna bird’s existence. Yet I believe that somewhere in the mountain of Tabor, there is a bird who can sing and its music can cure all illnesses known to man.”

Don Diego smiled. “I am simply doing my part as prince and brother, Ignacio. I will not believe it until I see and hear the bird for myself.”

Don Diego took out a gold coin from his pocket and offered it to Ignacio.

Ignacio held up his hands in protest. “It is not necessary to pay for my ale and company, young prince.”

“Take it. Despite the famine, we can still spare a few. Besides, I might not return this way again. How would I ever repay you?” Don Diego reasoned.

“My young prince, the future holds many secrets from us. What we do today may pave the way to our tomorrow.”

“Then I will give this to your daughter who made the ale.” Don Diego threw the gold coin in the air and caught it with his hand. He jogged to Ignacio’s house. The farmer ran after him, but the prince was quicker. Don Diego knocked at the door, and the eldest daughter opened the door. He bowed and asked her to receive the golden coin as his token of gratitude. Ignacio was dumbstruck. The farmer’s daughter, confused, stared at Don Diego as he took a few steps backward.

He turned to Ignacio. “She is a pretty lass, but she does not say much. Thank you for the ale and your company, Ignacio.”

Don Diego mounted his horse rode to the mountain path. When he reached the foot of the mountain, he saw an old man sitting by a rock, watching the stream flow by. He stood up when Don Diego approached him. Don Diego asked the old man for directions to Piedras Platas. Instead, the old man begged for food and water.

“I have no time for this, old man,” he said exasperated. Then he rode away, leaving the old man by the stream.

It took Don Diego seven days before locating the path to the meadow. On the seventh day at sunset, he found the tree. He had been circling the same path for days until he saw a wild dog cross the road into a path that led him to the meadow. If not for the dog, Don Diego would have remained lost in circles.

And there it was . . . Piedras Platas. He saw several stone formations under the tree. One stone in particular was shaped like a man in a kneeling position, its head bent low. Don Diego examined the statue. He gasped. It bore his brother’s features! For the first time in weeks, fear gripped his heart. Thoughts raced through his mind. *What magic could the Adarna bird do? What spell could it cast upon me?*

And then, he heard a song—

My child, you are weary
From play, from work, from your journey
Rest my child and think of nothing
Tomorrow is but a dream
Let me cradle you as I used to do
My heart beats! It sings for you!

You are mine, my son, so dear
Come, allow me to hold you near

"Mother!" Don Diego shouted. "Oh, mother!"

Don Diego cried and shouted for his mother. The song went on and on. He crouched between the two big roots of the tree and rocked himself back and forth as he wept. Soon, he was asleep.

A bird flew down to the sleeping prince. It alighted on his shoulder. It flapped its wings and made a bird call. Its droppings landed on the prince. Don Diego was turned to stone. The bird flew back up the tree, where it settled for the night. At dawn, it flew away toward the west.

Don Juan was worried sick. He had not heard from either of his brothers. His usual cheerful disposition was gone, and this saddened the people of the kingdom even more. The king lay dying in the palace. Hunger and thirst slithered across the land. Two princes had disappeared for months. Everyone clamored for an answer to end the pestilence.

Don Juan called the kingdom's emissaries. "My brothers have not returned. It has been almost three cycles of the moon. The King is between life and death. I will set forth to Tabor and finish the journey," he announced.

"What will we do if you fail to return, like your brothers?" one of the emissaries asked.

"Go this afternoon to my uncle's kingdom by the sea. Tell him where I am traveling. I will write him a letter for stewardship and assistance. He offered his granaries at the start of the famine. I am sure he will not turn you away," Don Juan replied. "Two of you must go. Open the royal coffers and bring him one bag of gold. You will need the royal guard for your travels."

And so it went that the youngest of the three sons of King Alfonso ventured on the same path his brothers took. Periodically, he stopped and sent news by pigeon, aided by the previous letters of his brothers. In three weeks' time, he reached Ignacio's farm.

Ignacio was feeding the chickens when Don Juan arrived. The farmer's son ran to his father, informing him of the prince's arrival. When Ignacio met Don Juan, he was overcome with pity, for the youngest prince of Berbania looked gaunt. The hollow of his cheeks showed, and there were dark circles around his eyes.

This was the farmer Don Juan's brother wrote about! "Ignacio, the farmer," Don Juan began, "please tell me of my brothers."

Surprised at the humility of his request, Ignacio gave the chicken feeder to his son and led the prince inside his home. He offered him a seat at the dining table. The prince settled comfortably. Then Ignacio began to tell him of Don Pedro and Don Diego's arrival and departure. He showed Don Diego the gold nugget as proof. He called for his eldest daughter to show Don Juan the golden coin.

When Ignacio's eldest daughter came to the table, Don Juan stood up and bowed in courtesy. She returned the greeting, curtsying low before the prince. When she stood straight, their eyes locked in a long stare.

"It seems I have met you before," Don Juan whispered.

The farmer's daughter did not speak, for she could not.

"I'm sorry. I must have offended you," he said still gazing at her. His mind raced back to the hundreds of faces he met in the past.

She shook her head and bowed apologetically, for she had no voice to express her ideas and feelings. She took from her skirt's pocket the gold coin that Don Diego gave her. She showed it to

the prince. Don Juan recognized the coin instantly, for embedded on its face was the visage of his father, the king.

The farmer turned to his daughter. He said, "Cecilia, the young prince is hungry from his journey. Why don't you cook us a nice meal? The prince will join us for dinner."

Then the farmer turned to Don Juan and asked, "Won't you?" knowing full well that the prince would graciously accept his invitation.

Cecilia curtsied once more and disappeared into the kitchen.

"Thank you for your invitation." Don Juan sat on the chair facing Ignacio. "Your daughter, she is about my age. She is quite shy."

"She lost her voice when she was younger. She once had the voice of an angel. When Cecilia sang, it was like heaven on earth," Ignacio said.

"Like the Adarna!" Don Juan exclaimed.

Ignacio chuckled. "Yes, like the Adarna. But of course, the Adarna is enchanted. We're simple folk. What do we know of magic?"

"So the Adarna is not a legend at all?" Don Juan probed the farmer.

"You are entering enchanted lands, my young prince. The truth of legend lies in what you hold to believe as true."

"My brothers and I were told of the Adarna bird's enchantment. But there must be a charm or a spell, even an antidote, to keep from falling into a deep slumber."

Ignacio heard what he expected to hear. He stood up and went to his room. When he returned, he carried a small pouch. Inside the pouch was a small knife the size of a man's forefinger. Ignacio showed this to Don Juan.

"You need to cut yourself on your forearm to keep from sleeping, or else . . ."

". . . the bird will turn me to stone with its droppings," continued Don Juan.

The farmer answered, "Yes. It will stop on the seventh round of the song."

"Then I can easily avoid it!" Don Juan exclaimed in glee. "You are a genius, Ignacio! But how did you know of such things when no one has returned from Tabor through these roads?"

The farmer leaned closer to the prince. "Many have attempted to catch the bird, and, yes, no one has returned to tell the victory tale. But then again, my young prince, no one has returned and gone beyond my farm to tell the tale," Ignacio replied in a hush.

Don Juan allowed all of this to sink in. He did not pry anymore. Instead, he asked Ignacio about his farm and his day-to-day routines. The farmer was very candid of his troubles with the farm. In return, the prince told Ignacio about the many ways in which farmers in Berbania planted rice and kept away crows that flew from in the west. He shared how orchard owners smoked their trees during the summer months to keep insects from breeding. He explained the curious way the royal veterinarian helped the cattle mate. He showed Ignacio how the chicken eggs could be protected from rodents. Lastly, he presented him with a calendar of the seasons that illustrated which crops to grow during a particular time of the year.

At dinner, Don Juan regaled Ignacio and his family of funny and inspiring stories from his kingdom. Ignacio saw how happy this made the prince. He also saw that for once, his daughter, Cecilia, was amused and delighted. When the table was cleared and the plates were cleaned, Don Juan took out his bamboo flute and began to play. It was lively music. Cecilia joined by joyfully clapping her hands to the beat. When the music was over, Don Juan and Cecilia beamed at each other.

"You were great!" Don Juan told her.

Cecilia blushed and excused herself. Don Juan was sad to see her leave the room. He felt regretful. He did not understand how he could have offended her a second time.

"It has been a long while since she heard music. My wife sang. And of course, so did my Cecilia when she had a voice," Ignacio told Don Juan.

"I better settle down at the cowshed." Don Juan stood up. "Thank you for the dinner, for your hospitality, and for the company of your wonderful family."

At dawn, two people were sad to see the prince leave the farm. Don Juan mounted his horse and proceeded up the mountain path.

Don Juan knew who and what to expect by the stream. His brothers' letters told him so. Unlike Don Pedro, however, he gave food and water to the old beggar. And unlike Don Diego, he kept the old man company until he swallowed his last piece of bread. Then Don Juan stood up and retrieved something from his saddlebag. He pulled out a shawl and gave this to the old man.

"Something to keep you warm," he said.

"Thank you. Go and cut a bamboo from the groves," the old man said.

Don Juan did as he was told. He came back with a tall stick of bamboo. The old man took one end of the bamboo, blew air inside it, and then went to the stream, filling the bamboo with water.

"This is yours," the old man said. "It will never run out of water until stone turns to life. Follow this stream, and you will find what you are looking for at sunset."

Don Juan took the bamboo and thanked the old man. He rode his horse and wasted no time. As the old man said, he reached Piedras Platas at twilight. He noticed instantly, the huge stones beneath the tree. He examined each one and immediately identified his brothers. The statues were cold to the touch. Then he remembered the bamboo filled with water. He went to his horse and grabbed the bamboo stick. Just as he was about to pour water on the statue, he heard wings flap. It was followed by a song—

My child, you are weary
From play, from work, from your journey
Rest my child and think of nothing
Tomorrow is but a dream
Let me cradle you as I used to do
My heart beats! It sings for you!
You are mine, my son, so dear
Come, allow me to hold you near

Don Juan put the bamboo down and listened to the song four times. Sleep swirled in his head, but he was conscious enough to know what the words of the song meant. It was an enchantment! For while it sounded like his mother's lullaby. He reminded himself that his mother would never come back from the dead.

He took the small pouch where the knife was hidden. He made a cut on his arm three times. Three times his blood flowed on the earth that held Piedras Platas. Every time his blood spilled on the soil, the tree's leaves turned to gold until the tree shone as bright as the sun. He was awake when the Adarna ended its song. It could not go near him. It perched itself on a branch where it laid its droppings. When it reached the ground, the tree's golden glow diminished.

"I spilled blood for you!" Don Juan called to the bird. "I broke your enchantment. Sing for my father and make him well. I will bring you back to Piedras Platas. The tree already knows who I am!"

The tree bent itself. The end of the branch that held the Adarna touched Don Juan's shoulder. The Adarna flew and alighted on his outstretched arm. Don Juan, the youngest of the three sons of King Alfonso, tamed the Adarna!

Picking up the bamboo, he poured water on his brothers' statues. They came back to life. In surprise, they backed away from Don Juan because they were frightened of the Adarna. Don Juan reassured them. He gave his brothers his horse and took a branch from the tree, using it to light their way. Taking the path down the stream, they reached the foot of the mountain at dawn. They continued to follow the stream until the water disappeared into the side of the mountain. Don Juan recognized the path that led to Ignacio's farm. With the Adarna bird on his shoulder and his brothers resting on his horse, Don Juan endured the long walk. When he reached the farm, he saw Cecilia coming out of the orchard with a basket of fruit.

She saw him and his brothers. She dropped the basket and shouted for her father. Don Juan heard her voice for the first time. It was music to his ears. He ran after her while the Adarna flew close by.

Ignacio went out to meet the young prince. Tears were in his eyes. "You tamed the Adarna! You brought my daughter's voice back!" Ignacio sobbed. "Thank you, Don Juan! Thank you!"

Don Juan steadied the farmer. "It is I who should be thankful. Without your help, I would not be able to tame the Adarna."

Don Juan approached Cecilia, who stood by the doorway.

"Juan . . ." she uttered.

"Cecilia, I will return for you," he told her and turned to Ignacio.

"We need a way back, Ignacio. We must return to Berbania!"

Ignacio lent them two more horses. When all was ready, Don Juan promised Ignacio that he would return. "I lived to tell the tale, Ignacio. I have returned from Piedras Platas and will travel beyond your farm. And though I have tamed the Adarna, it is your daughter, Cecilia, who has tamed my heart. I will return to you both once more."

When the princes arrived at Berbania, the whole kingdom was abuzz! Don Juan brought the Adarna bird to the king's sickbed. There, the Adarna bird sang a song they had not heard in years. The king sat up. He let out a big laugh and sighed deeply.

"I am well!" he proclaimed. With that proclamation, the dark gloom lifted from the kingdom. Rains fell and quenched the parched land. Food and water were once again plentiful. King Alfonso's brother hosted a royal celebration that lasted for days. The older brothers rested and were as fit as ever. As for Don Juan, he did not wait for the feast to finish.

Don Juan explained his most important mission to King Alfonso. With his father's blessing, Don Juan once again journeyed the road to Tabor. He returned the Adarna bird to Piedras Platas and met Ignacio, the farmer, on his way back.

Don Juan asked Ignacio to move to Berbania to become one of the royal agriculturalists. It would allow Don Juan to be close to Cecilia. The offer was a gracious one, but Ignacio declined it, for the farm meant everything to him. So Don Juan frequented the farm to see Cecilia. Every time he traveled back to Berbania, he left his heart behind at the farm.

In time, he asked for Cecilia's hand and his father's blessing. Who could say no to the prince who bled for the people he loved? And who could refuse giving his blessing to the prince who tamed the Adarna? Certainly not Ignacio or Alfonso, the king of Berbania.

Don Juan and Cecilia were married. The dreamer and the singer lived happily ever after.

THE FISHERMAN AND THE MERMAID

Surigao, Mindanao

Tomas and Doray were a couple who lived in the island of Dinagat in Surigao. Doray was nearly ready to give birth, so Tomas had to work extra hard. He had two jobs: one on the farm, harvesting crops, and one on the sea, fishing. Well before dawn, before he began his day on the farm, he could be found in the sea, fishing.

On one fishing trip during a full moon, as Tomas paddled away from the shore, he heard a woman singing faintly. He followed the voice, but when he reached the part of the sea where he thought the voice was coming from, he found himself surrounded by shrimp as big as a man's hand. He cast his lamp over the surface of the water for a better look. Neither the light of the moon nor his eyes were playing tricks on him. He placed the lamp on one end of his *bangka*, his boat, and retrieved his net from the other side. With one big swoop of the net, Tomas caught a bounty! He sold his catch at the market by dawn and returned home with a fat pocket.

Doray was pleased. In three months' time, their third child would soon be born. It had not been easy raising two children with Tomas's limited harvests and meager catches. She hoped their luck would change—that every time Tomas set out to sea, he would return home safe, loaded with a huge catch. As luck would have it, Doray's hope was fulfilled.

Fish and marine life abound in the archipelago. This starfish is a unique find that washed ashore on the white beach of Panglao island, Bohol.

During the next full moon, Tomas returned from the sea carrying two *banyeras*, washtubs, full of many kinds of fish like *galunggong*, *tanigue*, *lapu-lapu*, and huge crabs! He sold them at the market immediately. This time, his earnings doubled. When he returned home, Doray was delighted.

"What luck, Tomas! It must be the full moon." Doray beamed as she counted their earnings.

Tomas sighed. "I would consider it luck, yes, but I have not told you how I caught them, Doray." Tomas told his wife about the faint singing of a woman's voice he heard offshore. The voice would lead him to a place in the sea where a big catch awaited him.

"And the fish, they did not struggle. It is as if they were waiting for me," he said.

"Oh, Tomas, you have been chosen by a *kataw*, a mermaid!" Doray replied. "It will give us good luck, believe me."

"But I am afraid, Doray, for many fishermen have told of the mermaid's temperament. One day she is full of goodwill. The next time, she is full of malevolence." Tomas shook his head.

"Perhaps the *kataw* wants to be friends with a human. It is said that they provide treasures from the deep sea. Then we will be rich, Tomas!" Doray replied.

Tomas remained silent. He had seen the effects of the fisherfolk who had been enchanted by the *kataw*. Those who lived to tell the tale spoke of those who were taken and never seen again. Tomas was happy with the big catches he had had for two consecutive full moons, but he feared for his life.

On the third full moon, just a few days before Doray's scheduled time of birth, Tomas ventured into the sea again. He promised himself that this would be the last time. As Tomas paddled his small boat to sea, he waited for the faint singing. There was none. The only sound he could hear was the waves soft and gentle lapping on his boat. Then he saw a silver glint of fin flash before him. It was near his boat. He threw his net and began to pull. He had caught a huge fish.

Tomas pulled harder, but to his surprise, he saw the face of a beautiful woman with long hair cascading down her shoulders and chest. From her torso downward was the body of a fish. Her silver scales shone in the dark.

Frightened, Tomas let go of the net, and his catch fell back into the sea. For a moment, Tomas's heart stopped beating. The mermaid resurfaced carrying a red starfish that she offered to Tomas. He reached for the gift. When he touched the starfish, he fainted.

Tomas woke up inside his *nipa* hut, his bamboo house. A neighbor who was fishing at the same time saw his boat floating. Tomas was asleep inside his boat, holding a dying starfish. The neighbor tied Tomas's *bangka* to his and brought Tomas home. There was no catch inside his boat, and his net was missing. When Tomas awoke, Doray told him this as she showed the dead starfish inside a jar.

Tomas told his expectant wife what had happened. Tomas and Doray agreed that it was not safe to go back the sea anymore. Doray said, "But I am keeping this starfish. It may give us luck. You never know, Tomas." Doray left the room humming.

A few days later, Doray gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. Tomas worked on the farm, and it yielded a good harvest. Doray encouraged Tomas to go back fishing and try his luck once more. She kept the starfish in a jar by the *batalan*, the bamboo structure where they cleaned their fish. Tomas did not dare. The image of the *kataw* still haunted his dreams. He started digging for clams and oysters at low tide, though, and always he would come home bearing a full basket of clams and oysters.

Tomas could not explain it, but his crops multiplied that season. He was so busy, he needed a hired hand to help him with the harvest. Digging for clams and diving for oysters in the reef proved successful at every attempt. So one full moon before dawn, he found the courage to fish once more. There was no voice to lead him out to sea. But his instincts seemed to tell him where the best catch would be. He threw his net and hauled in three *banyeras* full of fish.

From then on, Tomas and Doray lived in abundance from farming and fishing. They became rich folks. People talked about their good fortune but felt sympathy for their third and youngest daughter. She was unable to speak. Like the *kataw*, she was strangely alluring, but no sound would come out of her full and beautiful lips.

THE LEGEND OF THE DURIAN FRUIT

Visayas and Mindanao

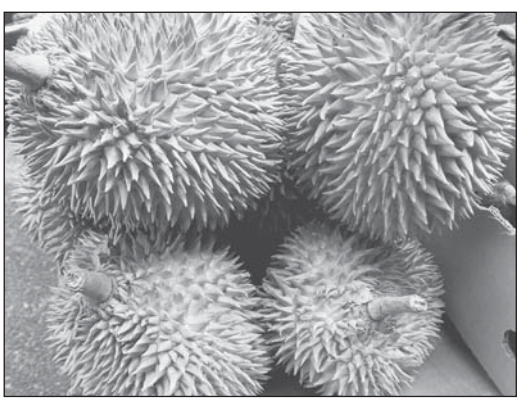
Story Note: The durian is a distinctive fruit. Although it has a foul smell that belies its unique flavor, it is a rare and exotic fruit favored by many. Its covering is thick and thorny, but its flesh is exquisitely tasty and sweet. Once upon a time, the durian was sweet smelling. This is a story that tells why the durian acquired such a foul smell.

Barom-Mai was very in love with his young bride-to-be, Madayao-Bayho. Unfortunately, she could not force herself to even like Barom-Mai. While he was a brave, wise, and powerful king, he was several years older than Madayao-Bayho, and he was ugly.

Barom-Mai knew about Madayao-Bayho's feelings toward him. To win her heart, she sought the advice of Matigam, his chief adviser. "On matters of love, I am afraid I am unable to lend my advice, my dear king. I suggest you find Impit Purok, the hermit of Mount Apo. His magic is powerful, and he can create an incantation that will make Madayao-Bayho become fond of you," Matigam told him.

"Then I will do whatever it takes!" Barom-Mai vowed.

That same day, Barom-Mai traveled to Mount Apo with his chief adviser at his side. When they met the hermit, Impit Purok, Barom-Mai was ready to do his bidding.



The durian fruit is known in Davao as the "king of fruits." The people of the island are drawn to its exotic taste. Candies and other pastry products are made from the durian.

"Aya!" Impit Purok sighed. "What drives a king crazy? Wealth, yes! And woman! But it is the latter that is the more challenging to conquer."

"I will do anything, Impit Purok," Barom-Mai pleaded. "Please, help me win her heart."

"To win her heart, I need you to bring me the egg of *Pawikan*, the sea turtle; milk from the whitest carabao, the water buffalo; and the nectar from the flower of the Make-Believe Tree," Impit Purok enumerated. "I will use all these to create a potion for the woman you wish to marry."

Impit Purok continued, "The egg I will use to soften her heart. The milk I will use to make her kind and tender. The nectar is to convince her that you are the most handsome man on earth."

Barom-Mai puffed himself up at Impit Purok's words. "If these ingredients are all your requirements, then I am ready to find them!"

"Aya!" Imput Purok sighed. "Good luck then. Come back when you have what I need. But if your quest is successful and my concoction is an effective potion, then I must be invited to your wedding."

Barom-Mai agreed. It was a small request from the hermit of Mount Apo. The king and his chief adviser departed the hermit's dwelling. Immediately after arrival in his kingdom, Barom-Mai, the ugly king, set to work. He called for his chef who knew where to find the most difficult of ingredients. He asked him to look for the whitest carabao, milk it, and bring the milk to the kingdom with great haste. He sent his messenger to call on Hangin-Bai, the wind nymph who dwelt between the land and the sea. She would know where to find the flower of the Make-Believe Tree. And then the king himself set out to see *Pawikan*.

Barom-Mai sailed his ship to Pawikan's kingdom. Pawikan saw the sails of Barom-Mai's ship from a distance. She knew that the time to fulfill her promise to the ugly king had come.

"Pawikan!" Barom-Mai greeted and bowed to the Queen of the Turtles.

"Barom-Mai!" Pawikan returned his greeting. "Was it only yesterday when you saved my kingdom from Tageb, the pirate king? You haven't changed at all!"

"Pawikan, your flattery is still the same," Barom-Mai laughed.

"All right!" Pawikan replied. "Let us stop this and get down to business."

Barom-Mai told her the reason for his visit. Pawikan was quiet for a second.

"Give me your hands," she said.

She placed her hands over Barom-Mai's hands, and when she removed them, a pearly white egg was cupped in Barom-Mai's hands.

Pawikan kissed her egg. "The sea nymph told me that you will marry the pirate king's daughter."

Barom-Mai nodded.

"Consider this a wedding gift," Pawikan said.

Barom-Mai thanked the Queen of the Turtles and left her kingdom, returning home. He was excited to hear good news from the cook and the wind nymph. His cook fetched the milk from the white carabao. His messenger held in her hands the flower from the Tree of Make-Believe.

"Your Majesty!" the cook and the messenger bowed.

The cook reported, "I was lucky to find the white carabao bathing in the river at twilight yesterday. It must have been the pull of the full moon's magic, King Barom-Mai, that led it to the river."

The messenger said, "Hangin-Bai had been wearing this flower in her hair for months now, King Barom-Mai. She had been looking for a new flower to adorn her hair. When I asked her about the flower from the Tree of Make-believe, she simply gave it to me. My timing was perfect!"

Barom-Mai was so pleased to have everything he needed for Impit Purok's concoction. He ordered his servants to prepare a trip to Mount Apo first thing in the morning.

Impit Purok was impressed. He mixed the three ingredients together and chanted—

Egg of the turtle to soften her heart
Milk so pure for tenderness and kindness
Nectar to sweeten the vision of her eyes

He stirred once. He stirred twice. Then chanted once more—

Egg! Milk! Nectar!
Sweet and soft!
Tender and kind!
Blind the lover!
Lover be blind!

Within minutes, the concoction was ready. Impit Purok filled a bamboo tube with the liquid. Its aroma tickled the nose of Barom-Mai. He could not wait to give it to his young bride and find out its effects.

"These are my instructions, Barom-Mai. Upon the arrival of the next full moon, go to your garden an hour after midnight. Dig a hole three feet deep and pour all of the concoction inside the hole. Wait until the surface of the liquid hardens, then re-cover the hole with the soil. You must do this alone." Imput Purok held out the bamboo receptacle.

"You mean I have to wait for the full moon?" Barom-Mai asked incredulously.

Imput Purok nodded, then continued, "Yes. Then wait patiently until a tree bearing fruit grows from it. It is a rare fruit, Barom-Mai. Pick the fruit when it is ripe and give it to your young bride-to-be."

Barom-Mai's heart sank. He did not realize that he would wait so long. Impit Purok sensed his disappointment. "Time is only an illusion, Barom-Mai, especially for one who loves. Be sure to follow my directions implicitly." The old hermit turned away.

Barom-Mai followed the hermit's instructions. In time, a tree grew on the very spot he poured and buried the concoction. He waited a few more months until it bore fruit. He knew the time was right to pick the fruit, for it smelled so fragrant. Everyone in his court was inexplicably happy. Even cats and dogs became friends. When he presented the fruit to Madayao-Bayho, she smiled at him for the first time.

"Taste the fruit. It is for you, especially. I alone tended it for months," Barom-Mai said.

He was amazed when she did not object. Usually, she would scowl or turn her face away from him. This time, it was different. She took the knife from the tray and cut the fruit in half. She took a whiff of the fragrant-smelling fruit and sliced a piece from its flesh. She ate it with so much gusto that she finished the whole fruit instantly.

Barom-Mai watched his young bride-to-be devour the fruit. He was satisfied.

"I see that you liked my gift for you." Barom-Mai observed.

Madayao-Bayho blushed. "I want more of it, please. The fruit the most delicious I have ever tasted."

She looked at the ugly king as if he were the most handsome man on earth. She reached for his hand and for the first time, touched him. Barom-Mai was beside himself.

"Of course! I will give you all of me and as much fruit as your heart desires. Let us be married, Madayao-Bayho!" he joyfully proposed.

"Yes, my King! Yes!" Madayao-Bayho replied ecstatically.

Their wedding was a lavish feast. Madayao-Bayho was beautifully dressed. Next to the brave Barom-Mai, she was resplendent. Pawikan attended the wedding and Hangin-Bai was there too. All the *datus*, kings, and rulers of the nearby islands were invited. Even Tageb, the pirate king, was present.

In the middle of the revelry, a ragged old man walked in the middle of the feast uninvited. It was Impit Purok. When Barom-Mai saw him, he realized the grave mistake he had made. The hermit of Mount Apo had not been invited to the wedding!

Impit Purok raised his staff. At the top of his lungs, he cried, "From now on, a foul smell will befall you Barom-Mai until you confess to your wife the secret you've hidden from her!"

Imput Purok stabbed his staff on the wooden floor, and a foul smell sprang forth. He turned and walked away, leaving everyone in the feast gagging and covering their noses.

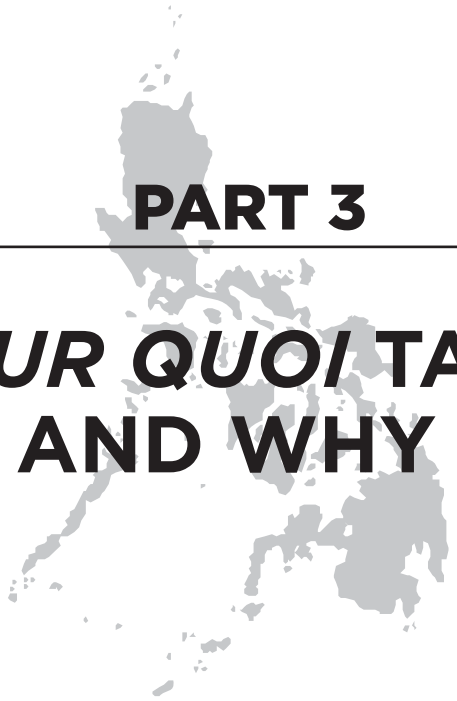
Madayao-Bayho asked her husband, "What is it, my spouse-king? Tell me!"

"Nothing, my dear! He was just a jealous old man, for he was not invited to our wedding!" Barom-Mai replied. With this, the foul smell increased severalfold. People began running out of the palace.

Hangin-Bai and Pawikan realized what had happened. Hangin-Bai gathered the foul odor that had spread like wild fire. With one sweeping motion, she had formed a big ball. Pawikan took the enormous conch shell that adorned her hair and enclosed the foul-smelling ball inside it. She buried the shell beside the tree that Barom-Mai planted many moons ago. The foul smell disappeared but not the suspicion in Madayao-Bayho's heart.

Hangin-Bai and Pawikan advised Barom-Mai never to allow his wife to eat the fruit of Impit Purok's tree. Barom-Mai then decided to move his kingdom to another island in one of his territories and settle there with his new wife-queen. Madayao-Bayho remained in love with Barom-Mai, but she turned out to be a suspicious and jealous queen.

As for the tree, it bore fruit that ripened with a disturbingly foul smell. It was the first durian fruit.



PART 3

POUR QUOI TALES (HOW AND WHY TALES)

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THE LEGEND OF THE BANANA

Mindoro, Southern Tagalog Region

In a village by the sea, there once lived a beautiful young girl named Juana. Her parents, especially her father, were very protective of her. Because of her unparalleled beauty and charm, Juana had many suitors.

One of Juana's suitors was a handsome young man named Aging. Juana and Aging spent a lot of time together. What started out as friendship quickly grew into something much deeper. Juana and Aging fell in love.

When Juana's father found out, he was enraged. He yelled, "Juana, you are not to see this young man or any young man for that matter!"

Juana was upset. "Father, please don't do this to me! I love Aging!"

But her father's heart was set in stone, and Juana broke the news to Aging. "My father has forbidden me to see you." She hung her head, tears cascading down her cheeks.

Aging lifted her chin and gazed deep into Juana's eyes. "Don't worry, my love. We will find a way to see each other."

Banana plantations abound in Mindanao, and the banana is a popular Filipino export. In the Philippines, it is not only the plant's fruit that is important. Filipinos make use of every part of the banana plant—the fruit, the heart, and the leaves. They even manufacture ketchup made from bananas!

Juana and Aging continued to see each other, meeting secretly in hidden, out-of-the-way places. Juana's father was none the wiser.

But fate had a way of intervening. One evening, Aging was waiting for Juana outside her window. Juana's father saw him and flew into a rage. "How dare you come near my daughter!"

Juana ran outside to try to stop her father, but it was too late. He grabbed a bolo and swung. The sharp knife struck one of Aging's arm, and it fell to the ground. Aging ran away, never to be seen again.

Juana was heartbroken. She picked up Aging's arm and buried it next to her window. Every day, she sat on the ground weeping over the loss of her beloved Aging, watering the grave with her tears. One morning, she came outside and

saw something unusual. Beside her window, a tall green tree bearing long yellow fruit had grown overnight.

Juana's mother and father were perplexed. Her mother asked, "What is this?"

Juana smiled. "It is a gift from Aging. From what was left behind, we now have these beautiful fruits and this handsome tree to remember him."

When Juana and her mother tasted the yellow fruit, they marveled at its sweetness and soft texture. When Juana's father tasted the fruit, he tasted sorrow and regret. He then asked Juana for her forgiveness.

From that time on, the tall green plant with a cluster of yellow fruit came to be known as "aging," which was later changed to "saging," the Tagalog word for "banana."

THE LEGEND OF THE CASHEW NUT

Palawan, Southern Tagalog Region

Story Note: Puerto Princesa is a city in Palawan. While it is known for its beautiful beaches and underground river, it is also home to delicious cashew nuts and daing*, or dried fish. One* barangay *(neighborhood) in the city, Roxas, happens to be Palawan's top cashew nut producer. This folktale about the cashew's seed growing from the outside is a common story retold in books. Here is another retelling of the popular fruit's unique physical appearance.*

Along time ago, cashew seeds were found inside its juicy flesh. One day, young Cashew Seed grew restless. It was dark inside the fleshy abode, and nothing ever happened. It was a boring place to be. All day, he could hear the songs of the birds that rested on Mother Cashew Tree's branches. He listened to the patient caterpillar's story of change and transformation. He did not believe it at first how a crawler could grow wings inside its dark cocoon. Cashew Seed longed to be free like the beautiful butterfly that the caterpillar had become.

One day, the butterfly visited. She spoke to Cashew Seed, who recognized her voice as the of the caterpillar. Butterfly said, "There are many flowers here in different hues, and though they vary, their nectars are all sweet."

"Oh, how I wish to see the world!" Cashew Seed sighed.

Butterfly laughed. "You are a fruit! You came from a plant," she replied. She said to Mother Cashew Tree, "You better nip this young seed's desire in the bud, or he will become restless, bringing about consequences he cannot control." Then Butterfly fluttered and flew away.

Mother Cashew Tree spoke gently, "My dear little seed, our kind are not meant to wander the world."

"Then what are we for, Mother Cashew Tree?" Cashew Seed asked.

"We are here to grow from the ground up, to take nutrients from the earth and nourish other living creatures," she said.

"Oh no! That sounds horrible!" Cashew Seed shuddered.

Mother Cashew Tree tried her best to comfort restless little Cashew Seed. "Not really. We undergo a change similar to the butterfly, though in a very different way. They are creatures who move about. We must stay rooted to the ground."

"What I wouldn't give to be able to move about!" Cashew Seed blurted. A strong gust of wind blew his way and rustled Mother Cashew Tree's leaves. Her fruits swayed with the wind, but they all held on since they were too young for the picking and not yet ripe.

That night, *Diwata*, the fairy, came down from the mountains. The wind whispered the little Cashew Seed's wish into her ear. Impressed by his spunk and sprite, she granted Cashew Seed his wish by bringing him out of his fleshy shell. She hung him upside down, out of the yellow cashew fruit.

Diwata said, "Mother Cashew Tree, this is all I could do for the little seed. No more, no less. Don't say he didn't ask for it." With that, she moved on through the forest.

Morning came, and Mother Cashew Tree observed what the little seed had become. When Cashew Seed awoke, he was so surprised! It was pure delight to see the ground and the roots where his mother clasped for support. He loved looking at the other trees and plants in the orchard, at the flowers that bloomed in vibrant hues, and at the insects and birds that flew about. White clouds skittered across the blue sky. The warm sun bathed his delicate skin, and the wind blew soft and cool kisses. Mother Cashew tree kept strangely silent.

By mid-morning, a bird flew by and pecked on the little seed. Cashew Seed squealed from the pain, for the bird had a sharp beak. Wind blew a strong gust, and the bird flew away. But Wind did not stop. She kept blowing in several directions. Cashew Seed swayed to and fro. He felt so dizzy. By noon, Sun's rays sizzled his skin, and he cried out from pain of the heat. Before the day ended, Rain doused him, cooling him down, but by the time the rain stopped, Cashew Seed was shivering from the cold.

Moon appeared in the sky at twilight. Stars twinkled one by one. It was lovely to behold. Little Cashew Seed was too tired to marvel at the wonderful night sky above him. He now wished for the warm comfort of his fleshy fruit. He said it out loud, many times over. Mother Cashew Tree interrupted him.

"I'm afraid Wind is gone and cannot carry your wish to the gods. *Diwata* granted you your heart's desire. I have accepted it, and so must you. From now on, you will grow outside of my fruit's flesh and endure the elements. Perhaps in time, your seed's skin will grow strong enough to protect you. You will learn to be patient."

As time wore on, Cashew Seed's skin grew and thickened, as did his patience. His hearty skin protected the tender nut inside. He saw many seasons come and go, and he learned to appreciate Sun, Wind, and Rain for their restorative gifts. Since that time, cashew seeds grow outside of their fruit, hanging upside down, watching the world.

THE LEGEND OF THE MANGO FRUIT

Zambales, Central Luzon

A long time ago, there was a rich old couple who owned an orchard. There were many fruit-bearing trees growing in the orchard. They were good farmers, and they were always blessed with a good harvest, regardless of the climate. Unknown to the couple, their orchard was the dwelling place of an *engkanto*, a tree spirit who kept the trees healthy throughout the rainy and dry seasons.

The old couple had a son, Manuel. The young boy was as industrious as his father and as kindhearted as his mother. Indeed, the family considered themselves fortunate to have such a good lot in life.

This made them good citizens of the *barangay*. Because they realized how blessed they are, they shared these blessings to others. They hired people to work for them in the orchard and gave them proper wages. They provided shelter for the homeless, especially at times when typhoons raged and there were many who lost their homes.

The mango is the national fruit of the Philippines. If the durian is the king of fruits, then the mango is the queen. Her sweet flesh is preserved and dried, mixed in salads, and served as a relish alongside many grilled dishes. Cakes and cookie bars are flavored with mangoes as well as fruit juices, ice cream, and selected cocktails.

Manuel inherited his parents' charitable ways. He adopted a family of stray cats that wandered into their backyard. He played with the workers' children and taught them the letters he learned from the *kura paroko*, the parish priest. He gave his old clothes to a beggar he met in church. He brought home a woman who got lost in town. The following day, he and his father brought her back to her home in the mountain's footholds. Indeed, Manuel was a boy with a golden heart.

The *engkanto* knew all of these good deeds, and as a reward, she kept the fruit trees healthy and strong, yielding an abundance of fruit. With their blessed bounty, the rich couple shared their harvest and their earnings.

Then one day, Manuel fell ill. His fever was so high that no medicine could bring his fever down. After three days, he died.

The rich couple went into deep mourning. The *engkanto* wept too. She was so stricken with grief that on the night of Manuel's funeral, she took the form of a woman and paid her last respects to Manuel. The *engkanto* could not bear to see Manuel's mother suffer inconsolably. The mother talked to the *engkanto* about her son's golden heart and how he always helped the less fortunate.

"Where do you plan to bury his remains?" the *engkanto* asked Manuel's father.

"In the town cemetery, where else?" he replied.

The *engkanto* suggested, "Why not bury him in the orchard? There is a clearing in the middle of it where only grass grows. This way, he will always be near you."

The rich couple embraced the idea. They buried Manuel's remains in the midst of the orchard. Every day, his parents would visit his grave. They offered flowers and prayers.

The *engkanto*, on the other hand, worked her magic. After several moons and the passing of the summer solstice, a plant grew on Manuel's grave. The old couple was very curious. They thought it was nature's way of reminding them that in death, life grows. They took care of the plant. As good farmers, they successfully nurtured the plant into a tree. It had heart-shaped leaves that narrowed at the tip. The trunk held the rest of the tree, root, and branches, sturdily. And then it flowered! The small yellow flowers bloomed and turned into heart-shaped fruit! These fruits were green at first, but in time they turned a deep golden yellow.

Manuel's parents harvested the first ripe fruit of the mysterious tree. They sliced the fruit in half, revealing a heart-shaped seed when the meat was removed. The couple cried, for it reminded them of a young boy's golden heart. When they tasted the fruit, it was tender and sweet. It reminded them of Manuel. The ripe golden fruit, shaped like a heart, was the first mango.

THE LEGEND OF MARINDUQUE

Mimaropa Region, Luzon

Story Note: Marinduque is often called the "heart of the Philippines." If one were to imagine the entire archipelago of over 7,000 islands as an old man sleeping in a chair, the island of Marinduque would be his "heart." A local legend, full of love and tragedy, explains how the island of Marinduque came to be. The island was discovered by the Spaniards in 1579.

There was once a young maiden named Mutya Maria. She came from a privileged family, the daughter of the wealthy and powerful Datu Batumbakal. Maria, as she was called by all who loved her, was a kind and gentle soul. She was popular in school, intelligent, and an exquisite beauty. She was a fair girl with light caramel skin, ebony hair that cascaded down her back, and teeth as white as rare pearls from the ocean's floor. She was the jewel of her family and the pride of her people. As such, her fame grew, and Maria garnered many suitors.

From far and wide, they came to seek her hand in marriage. Datu Bagal came from Mindoro, Datu Sagwil came from Laguna, and Datu Kawili came from Camarines. Because they were equal in stature to Maria's father, they were given free access to the palace, able to visit Maria whenever they pleased. They each brought Maria gifts of gold and jewels and promises of honor and fame. However, Maria was searching for something else. Maria wanted to marry neither for fortune nor fame but for love.

Garduke was a poor fisherman from Taal, on the other side of the island. One day, as Maria was walking along the beach, they had a chance meeting. Duke, as he was known to his family and friends, had nothing to offer her but kind words and heartfelt poetry. He was simple but sincere, and immediately Maria was smitten. She tried to meet him as often as she could, in secret, for she knew her father would not approve of their relationship. They met under the cover of darkness and often took long walks on the beach, their path illuminated only by the shimmering moonlight. They held hands and whispered promises of unending love.

Unfortunately, Maria was right. One day, Datu Bagal discovered that Maria was meeting in secret with her lover. He reported it to Maria's father. Datu Batumbakal was furious. He forbade Maria to ever see Duke again. But love had a way of breaking the rules. Maria and Duke found surreptitious ways to meet and made plans to leave the island and elope.

Duke spent several days carving a *bangka*, a small boat. Maria spent her days packing clothing and provisions for their trip. After what seemed like an eternity, everything was finally ready. In the shadow of night, Duke pulled the boat to the shore near the palace. Maria joined him, and they set sail. The lovers were excited about their journey and what the future held in store for them.

Alas, their journey was an ill-fated one. Duke paddled into the night, and soon they were miles out to sea. Then it happened. A raging storm sealed the lovers' fate. Unforgiving winds churned the sea, and relentless waves tossed their small craft as they cradled each other. When morning arrived and the sun shone upon calm seas, the vessel was discovered, shredded to pieces. Maria and Duke were nowhere to be found.

A few days later, fisherman from Taal saw a new landform rise from the water. It became an island, verdant with white-sand shores. To honor Maria and Duke, the island was named "Marinduque" and represents the eternal love between two people who shared one heart. Today, Marinduque remains the "heart" of the Philippines.

THE LEGEND OF *LANZONES*

Laguna, Southern Tagalog Region

Story Note: Lanzones *trees grow abundantly in the provinces of Laguna, Batangas, and Quezon. Its fruit is known for its sugary flavor. There was a time, however, when the* lanzones *fruit was so poisonous that no one dared to eat it. This is a tale about how the* lanzones *became edible.*

In the town of Magdalena, Laguna, a big church stands on top of a hill. The church is known for its historic relevance because a young general, Emilio Jacinto, sought sanctuary in its convent when he was wounded during the Filipino-American War. The steps that lead to the convent were smeared with his blood. A marker can be found on the spot where the fallen hero took a brief respite from the battle.

Long ago, in that same church in Magdalena, Laguna, there was a statue of the Virgin Mary with the Infant Jesus cradled in her arms. The statue was believed to be miraculous.

There were many days and nights when sacristans and the church cleaners would find the podium empty. The statue was missing. Sightings of a beautiful woman with a baby were abundant among the townsfolk.

One day, an elderly man who grew fruit-bearing trees on his farm chanced upon a beautiful woman. She was fair skinned with long wavy hair and carrying a child in her arms. She and her baby were walking on a path that led to his orchard. She woman seemed harmless, so he followed them. He was curious as to why the mother and baby were entering his property.

The *lanzones* is another tropical fruit that is plentiful in Southeast Asia. The fruit's leathery covering can be dried and burned to repel mosquitoes. In a country where malaria and dengue are rampant, these fruit are treasured indeed.

The woman walked past the *rambutan* (small red spiky fruit) trees and the *dayap* (black palm) trees. She ignored the loaded cashew trees and the full jackfruit trees. Instead, she walked to the tree that bore the deadly *lanzones* fruits.

The old man tried to stop her from picking a fruit. "No!" he shouted. "That fruit is poisonous!" But it was too late.

The beautiful woman and her child both looked at his way. "Thank you for your concern, but my son and I have been so hungry," she replied softly to him.

She peeled the thick velvet covering of the *lanzones* fruit, exposing its clear and juicy flesh. She broke the fruit into half and gave one-half to her son, who ate all of it except the seeds. She took the other half and ate it as well.

The old man waited nervously. He thought the woman and her child would either collapse in pain or die on the spot, but nothing happened. The woman picked more fruit. She and the child ate the fruit, smiling. Picking a bunch from the tree, she walked to the old man and offered him the *lanzones*.

She pressed them into his hand. "These are blessed fruit. They will always taste as sweet as sugar. Thank you for your generosity."

The old man was in awe of the woman's beauty and her child's penetrating but gentle stare. He watched them walk away together, out of his orchard, and onto the road. He took one of the *lanzones* fruit she gave him and peeled it. She was right. It's taste was as sweet as sugar!

That night, the farmer told the story to his wife and sons. They did not believe his story until he ate the *lanzones* fruit in front of them. Then the farmer's family tasted the *lanzones* fruit and marveled at its deliciousness. While eating, the youngest son, who was a *sacristan* at the church, told them about the mysterious *lanzones* peelings he found on the palm of the Infant Jesus' statue. The Virgin Mother had *lanzones* leaves caught in her hair. Since the mysterious visit of the woman and the child, the fruit of the *lanzones* remains edible and sugary sweet.

THE FIRST RAINFALL

Iriga, Camarines Sur, Bicol Region

Dakula was a great giant who lived in a cave. Outside the cave was a spring of water that only he could enjoy. People who lived in the nearby *barangays*, neighborhoods, were deprived of water. They had to journey for several days to get water from the sea. And though seawater was salty, they had no choice but to use it. They would tap on trees and dig wells underneath the ground to find water to drink. It was a difficult and tedious task.

One day, the villagers became overwhelmed with exhaustion. It was so tiring going through all these measures just to procure water. It was a basic need but one that was life sustaining. One man knew of the spring that existed beside Dakula's cave. He suggested to the elders that they ask Dakula to share some of his water with them. It was a dangerous proposal, however, because the giant was selfish and fierce.

Many stories of giants are found in Filipino folk stories. Bernardo Carpio is one. His legend is one that is fondly told in the provinces of Rizal. It is said that he was trapped between the mountain ranges of the Sierra Madre holding the earth to prevent earthquakes from happening. This photo of a giant foot print was taken in Capul, a little island in Northern Samar. A local folk story circulates on the island that a giant used to live in Capul but decided to move to another island in Catarman. Thus, the footprint is a dent of the giant's leap toward Catarman.

"We have to try," one elder said.

"We can offer rice, fruit, and vegetables in exchange for the water," another elder suggested.

"But could we offer him enough? He is a giant!" a young man exclaimed.

In the end, they agreed that it was worth the risk. The men from the *barangays*, along with their elders, traveled to Dakula's cave bearing gift baskets of rice, fruit, and vegetables. When they reached the giant's lair, they laid the gifts at the cave's opening.

"Dakula!" one elder called out. "We are here to ask for water from your spring. In exchange, we offer you our labor's products."

They waited until Dakula, the great giant, appeared. He was a terrible sight to behold with his thick bushy eyebrows, dark piercing eyes, a mouth as big as boulders, and teeth as sharp as knives. The men trembled at the sight of him. When Dakula spoke, the men were astonished at how low and gentle his voice sounded.

"I do not require your offerings." Dakula began. "My only condition is this: you may take water from the spring but only enough for your village. If you take too much and the spring dries up, you will suffer grave consequences!" With this, he retreated to the cave.

The men went back to their *barangays* rejoicing! They gathered their *bangas* (pots), *tapayans* (earthen jars), and other water receptacles. They freely fetched water from Dakula's spring. For months, they did this in moderation. But man, by nature, can be excessive.

Their greed overcame their common sense. They conveniently forgot their promise to Dakula. They squandered the water until the spring dried up. When the weather became too hot to bear, no one had enough to drink, including the great giant, Dakula. Fear crept into every *barangay*. Every elder remembered the agreement they made with the giant many moons ago. The men prepared their axes, knives, and *itak* (bolos). They expected Dakula's revenge. But days passed, and nothing transpired.

One night, people heard a low and gentle whistling wind. The men knew the sound. Fear's icy fingers squeezed their hearts. Suddenly, one by one, all the women and children of the *barangay* awakened and followed the whistling wind to Dakula's cave. The men could not stop their women and children from leaving their homes. All the men could do was follow them.

Dakula stood on top of the mountain, whistling. Behind him was the moon, round and full against the dark sky. Dakula did not stop whistling until all of the women and children reached the mountain. The men stopped in their tracks, unable to move although they wanted desperately to follow their beloved women and precious children. The men cried for their loved ones in futility.

Dakula reached for the sky with his big hands. Using his fingers, he carved an opening big enough for a person to walk through. He began to whistle again. One by one, the hypnotized women and children entered the celestial portal that Dakula created. When the last woman and child had entered, Dakula sealed the sky with a thunderous clap from his enormous hands. Light ripped across the ebony canopy. Then the sky rumbled and began to cry. It was the first rainfall.

It was Dakula's punishment for the people's neglectful and wasteful ways. For many moons, when the skies cried, the men cried for it reminded them of their precious loss.

THE FIRST BULLFROG

Cebu, Central Visayas

There was a man who did nothing but eat. He did not work or did he help his wife in the fields. He grew so big and so fat that his body bloated like a big balloon. His arms and legs seemed to shrink each day. His neck swelled so much that speaking and even breathing were difficult to do.

One day, he begged his wife to bring him to the market, for he was craving mangoes. His wife pulled a wheelbarrow, lifted him up into it, and pushed him toward town. On their way to the market, they came upon an old wooden bridge. The wife tried to push the wheelbarrow up the bridge, but it was very heavy. With a mighty heave and a deep breath, she scooted the overloaded wheelbarrow forward onto the wooden bridge. The bridge creaked and moaned under the monstrous weight of the wheelbarrow.

At the top of the wooden bridge, the wife paused to catch her breath. The husband became impatient and placed his stubby hands on each side of the wheelbarrow. He swayed from left to right in an attempt to roll himself down the bridge to the other side, where the market was.

His wife pleaded, "No! Keep still or you might fall in the river. I will go to the market and bring the mangoes to you. I just needed to rest for a minute because I am all out of breath. You are so fat and heavy."

The greedy husband made strange sounds. "Oh! Kraaak-ak! Oh! Kraaak-ak!"

He continued to sway on the wheelbarrow, left and right, right and left, until the wheelbarrow tipped to one side and . . . he fell into the river! He could not swim. He began drowning.

His wife jumped after him and swam to save him. Alas, the current was too strong, and her efforts were in vain. She watched helplessly as the river washed her husband away. The last image she had of her husband was of a big, bloated man bobbing down the river trying to lift his head to gasp for air. She went home, wet and crying.

Summer came, and the river was nearly dried up. The wife hoped to find her husband's body in the river. She found nothing. When rainy season arrived, the locals discovered a new animal living in the river. It was ugly with slimy skin, bulging eyes, and a rotund belly. It had short arms and legs. It hopped on the land and bobbed in the water.

When the wife heard of this, she ran to the river to see the animal. The rotund creature with the short appendages made strange sounds. "Oh! Kraaak-ak! Oh! Kraaak-ak!" It reminded her of her late husband. It was the first bullfrog.

THE GIFT OF KABUNYIAN

Benguet, Cordillera Autonomous Region

Story Note: Rice is a staple food in the Philippines. The rice terraces of the mountain provinces are breathtaking. Although the Cordillerans harvest rice, they consider kamote*, or sweet potatoes, to be their staple food. But in this Benguet tale, Kabunyian, the creator of all things, introduces rice to the people of Cordillera. How old man Lao-ang acquires this precious grain is explained in this tale.*

When the world was young, there was no rice. People hunted, fished, and gathered fruit and nuts for food. Old man Lao-ang did just that. He hunted. He fished. He gathered fruit and nuts.

One day, he went out to fish and gather fruit. By mid-morning, his basket was still empty. Exhausted, he sat on a rock and prayed to Kabunyian, the creator of all things.

"Ay, Kabunyian! I am old. I can no longer hunt or fish with ease. I am too weak to climb trees and pick fruit. I wish I had died when I was younger. Now, I fear dying old and hungry." Lao-ang lamented.

Kabunyian heard Lao-ang's every word. He dropped a rope to Lao-ang, who held on and was pulled up into the sky world. There, Kabunyian gave him a round wooden plate of steamed rice to eat.

"Eat this, old man Lao-ang. It is food. Its name is rice," Kabunyian told him.

Lao-ang ate the rice and enjoyed every morsel. He asked Kabunyian to give him grains to plant at home. But Kabunyian denied his request. When Kabunyian was not looking, Lao-ang surreptitiously stole some grains of rice and hid them in his *alampay*, the kerchief he wore around his

Rice is the staple food of Filipinos and it means more than just sustenance. It carries cultural and religious symbolism for many ethnic tribes and provincial peoples. The Cordillerans offer rice to the Bul-ols, rice gods, to pray for a bountiful harvest. The Tagalogs shower rice grains upon newly weds as a symbol of posterity. In Bukidnon, Mindanao island, a newborn is held over the tops of rice stalks as a way to welcome the infant to the world. Rice holds a prominent place in Filipino song, dances, arts, literature, and life. Eating rice is one tradition that has remained intact in the Filipino way of life despite three colonial masters. You will still find that many Filipinos eat rice with their hands, forgoing utensils.

waist. He bade Kabunyian good-bye. But Kabunyian was suspicious and stopped old man Lao-ang, searching him for rice. Sure enough, Kabunyian found the hidden, stolen grains. Lao-ang made another attempt at concealing more grains by hiding them in the belt of his G-string. Once again, he was caught by Kabunyian and had to surrender the pilfered grains.

Determined to bring home the delicious grain, feisty Lao-ang took one grain of rice and hid it inside his mouth. Still, Kabunyian knew and searched Labangan once more. Kabunyian even asked the old man to open his mouth. The all-knowing god found the single grain concealed under the old man's tongue.

"Why do you continue to try to take these grains of rice?" Kabunyian asked, irritated.

"The rice is delicious, Kabunyian. If I plant these, I will never go hungry again," Lao-ang cried.

"Very well! This grain of rice will be my gift to you, but you must agree to work hard to nurture the stalks and harvest the grains!" Kabunyian said.

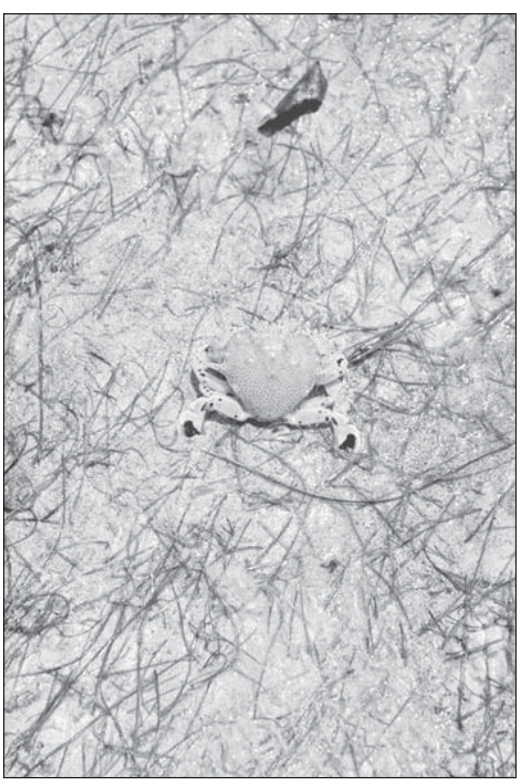
Lao-ang agreed and returned home. He planted single grain and from this stalks grew. He taught his family, his neighbors, and his friends how to plant rice. Soon after, everyone was planting rice. They harvested the grains, shelled them, cooked them, and ate the tasty white rice. They never grew hungry again.

HOW CRAB GOT ITS EYES

Laguna, Southern Tagalog Region

Tong-tong-tong-tong
Pakitong kitong
Alimango sa dagat (Crab from the sea)
Mabilis at mailap (Swift and fast)
Mahirap mahuli (Hard to catch)
Sapagkat nangangagat! (Careful! The pincers snap!)

The world was young and new. Bathala, the creator, knew that there was still so much work to do. He rolled up his sleeves and started for the seashore.



There, he commanded the wind to stroke the waves so the seawater could carve the land. He instructed the rain to shape the mountains. He called upon the sun to help the plants and trees grow. Very soon, new animals would live and inhabit the forest. Pleased to see the promise of life about him, he began journeying home.

Suddenly, a small animal nudged him on the foot. He looked down at a gray-shelled animal, scurrying to and fro, with no clear direction as to where it wanted to go. Gently, Bathala picked up the creature. The animal's legs wiggled and waggled in the air.

"Ah! Little crab, you seem to be growing very fast!" Bathala exclaimed proudly. He turned Crab around and keenly examined the animal.

"But it seems I have forgotten to give you eyes," Bathala sighed.

Like the shrimp, crabs are a favorite dish of many Filipinos from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. One Filipino idiom, the "crab mentality," means that a person succeeding in life gets to be pulled down or bashed by his peers instead of lifting him up and giving him encouragement.

"I would really appreciate a pair, Bathala!" Crab replied restlessly.

Bathala opened his left hand and placed Crab carefully in the middle of his palm. Crab was as cold as the water. Bits of sand covered his shell. He scuttled impatiently and would not stay still. Falling from Bathala's cupped hand, Crab landed on the sandy shore on his back. His little legs flailed in the air.

Bathala picked up Crab and securely held the perky animal in his cupped hands. But Crab was impatient. He moved around and around in Bathala's hand. Because Crab was moving about so much, Bathala had difficulty deciding where to put his eyes. Bathala took a deep breath, and with one whoosh, a pair of eyes jutted out of Crab's head.

"I can see now!" Crab cried and jumped down from Bathala's warm hands. He walked sideways with an awkward but swift gait.

"Wait!" Bathala ran after Crab. "Your eyes do not have sockets yet!"

"Just give me pincers, Bathala, so I can use them to bury myself in a hole and catch some food."

"If that is your wish," Bathala replied as he gathered a small mound of sand in his hands.

"Be still," Bathala commanded, but again, Crab would not heed. With a new pair of eyes, he became more excited, moving and scurrying about. Bathala placed his sand-filled hands near his lips as if kissing the grains, then quickly sprinkled the sand on the restless crab. Because Crab would not keep still, the sand landed unevenly. When the pincers appeared, one formed bigger than the other.

Crab tumbled at first but found his balance. Bathala smiled to himself as Crab turned around to thank him. It was a strange animal to look at, but Bathala knew that Crab would thrive despite his imperfections.

GUINTUDAN'S GREED: THE FIRST STARS, SUN, AND MOON

Kalinga Apayao, Cordillera Autonomous Region

Story Note: Guintudan *is a term that means "greed." In this story, the word is used as a noun to name a person who succumbs to his great desire for food.* Guintudan *originates from the root word* guintud*, which is the word for a slim bamboo receptacle for food or water.*

Guintudan went off to hunt. He had many children who, like him, had a tremendous appetite for food. He came upon a river where he met a fish named Ikan. Ikan invited him to share a feast. Of course, Guintudan, who had an insatiable hunger, would never refuse such a tasty invitation.

"What do you have on the table?" Guintudan asked Ikan.

"Come and see!" Ikan replied with glee.

There, Guintudan saw all kinds of boiled, roasted, and stewed dishes. His stomach grumbled. His mouth watered at the sight of boiled seafood, roasted pigs, and stewed chickens. There was a bountiful array of fruit. Freshly picked nuts and berries filled little baskets. Guintudan ate to his heart's content. After having his fill, he loosened his G-string and lowered his bolo down his abdomen, for he had grown fat.

The *gangsa* is one important and precious musical instrument of the Cordillerans. It is worth one person's land and family. It is used in many feast and rituals of the many ethnic tribes of the Cordillera.

He thanked Ikan and left. He had difficulty walking because his stomach protruded like a ripe watermelon. He passed by a pond where he met Palilengs, the pond fish, who was also hosting a lavish feast. Palilengs invited him to his table where all kinds of tantalizing food, side dishes, and desserts were being served. Palilengs also had wine to offer. Such an amazing spread was too difficult to resist, so Guintudan immediately accepted the invitation. Again, he ate to his heart's content. He piled food high atop his plate and returned to the table for seconds and thirds. Oh, how he enjoyed the delicacies! Afterward, Guintudan had become enormously fat!

He thanked Palilengs and left the feast with a stomach three times bigger than when he arrived. He plodded on. His bolo had slid down to his legs. He wobbled and had great difficulty walking. His G-string could no longer be seen as fat became an apron, covering it.

On his way home, he heard the joyful ringing of the *gangsas*, brass gongs. He immediately thought about food! Another feast, he said to himself. He smacked his lips and hurried to the party. He saw men and women dancing. They looked lovely in their shining beads, clinking bracelets, dangling necklaces, ornate headdresses, and sparkling tiaras and crowns. As soon as the music stopped, the partygoers stared at Guintudan, who stood under the archway. He was so fat that he blocked the entire entrance to the party. His stomach was so huge that he seemed to be wearing no G-string at all. His bolo hung below his knees, and his feet were like bulbous blobs of flesh attached to his legs. People at the party only saw two slits for eyes, puffy cheeks, and a swollen mouth. They laughed at the sight of him.

Guintudan was offended. He turned slowly away.

"Wait!" cried a woman who wore the biggest crown. "Dance for us! We have not seen an enormously fat man dance!"

Guintudan wobbled to the dance floor thinking that if he granted the woman's request, he would be given an invitation to partake in the feast. The *gangsas* played, and Guintudan danced. People at the party clapped their hands and laughed at the sight of him. He wiggled and waggled on the dance floor. The party guests took off their beads, bracelets, necklaces, and tiaras and adorned Guintudan with them. The woman who wore the biggest crown, the host of the party, took off her crown, then placed it on Guintudan's head.

The *gangsas* played on and on. Guintudan danced and danced. He turned and twirled and spun around. He did not stop from spinning until he felt himself rising from the ground. He soared up, up, and up into the night sky! Everyone in the party shouted for him to return.

"Give us back our beads and bracelets!"

"Give us back our necklaces!"

"Give me back my crown!" cried the woman who owned the biggest crown.

But Guintudan could not stop himself from flying away from them. He could only hear their faint cries. The people at the party watched him disappear into the night sky, but the beads, bracelets, and necklaces twinkled brightly against the dark blanket of the heavens. These became the first stars. The biggest crown hung high, shining luminescently, and became the first moon.

HOW THE BANAUE RICE TERRACES CAME TO BE

Banaue, Cordillera Autonomous Region

Apo Lakan, the first *mumbaki*, or tribal doctor, of the Ifugao, decided to carve an image of the rice god, Bul-ul. His people were dying of hunger. At the time, rice and other root crops like *kamote*, or sweet potato, were planted in the flatlands and valleys. For Apo Lakan and his people, these land formations were scarce since the Ifugaos lived in the Cordillera mountains. So Apo Lakan was fueled with the hope that the rice god, Bul-ul, would bring forth a great harvest despite the limited space for rice plantations.

He carved the idol of Bul-ul late into the night. Apo Lakan then fell asleep and dreamed. In his dream, he saw the rice god stand up from his squatting position and climb up a mountain leading to the heavens.

In his dream, Apo Lakan rose from his position. He brought his chicken as an offering and followed Bul-ul to the mountains. Bul-ul was waiting for him at the mountaintop. There, he offered the chicken and performed a ritual. Bul-ul raised his hand to the heavens. It opened up to reveal a great stairway made of shining green grass with golden flecks on the tips. The golden flecks detached from the tip of each blade of grass and rained down on Apo Lakan. He held out his hand and caught the grains of rice.

In 1995 the Banaue Rice Terraces were proclaimed a World Heritage. This photo, however, is of the Fidelisan Rice Terraces located in Sagada, Benguet. The rice terraces of this region differ from their Banaue counterparts. In Banaue, the terraces are made strictly out of clay and dirt. In Benguet, retaining walls, made of rock, support every level of the rice terraces.

When Apo Lakan awoke, his hands clutched the grains of rice that Bul-ul had given him in his dream. He jumped out of his seat and called his tribe's people. He told them about his dream. He showed them Bul-ul's gift from heaven. He described how the great stairway looked, how rice stalks grew on each, and how the rice grains would be harvested from the plant when each grain turned golden in the sun.

From Apo Lakan's vision, the people of Banaue built the rice terraces on the side of the mountains. Each step of the staircase was carved by hand, and each stalk of rice was planted manually with the help of sturdy mountain carabao. They toiled long and hard, and when they were finished, they created great stairways made of shining green grass with golden flecks on the tips. These stairways became their homage to Bul-ul, and the mountain people of Banaue cultivated heavenly crops of rice each year.

WHY BATS FLY AT NIGHT

National Capitol Region

Story Note: There was a time when bats flew during the day. This tale explains how they became nocturnal animals.

One day, Bat was flying from tree to tree looking for a fresh mango, or *rambutan*, to eat. He flew a bit higher to get a better view of the trees and its fruit that thrive in the forest. Tired from flying, he rested on a tall *narra* tree.

Hawk was perched on a nearby branch. He flew down beside Bat, his fierce, hunting eyes trained upon him. This frightened Bat, so he stretched out his wings. The hawk took several steps back in utter surprise.

"I thought you were a tree rat of some kind!" Hawk exclaimed.

"No!" Bat replied emphatically. "Like you, I have wings. I can fly!"

Jumping from the branch and into the air, Bat flapped his wings and glided effortlessly on the air. He flew away from Hawk, who was still wondering if Bat was truly a bird.

Bat was still shaking from the experience of almost becoming Hawk's prey that he decided to fly to the nearest mountain. There he found a cliff where he perched himself on one of the rocks that jutted out from the face of the mountain. He thought he was safe until the sly Alamid, a mountain cat, pounced on him.

"What a delicious meal you would make, little bird," Alamid said, sniffing Bat from head to foot.

"I'm not a bird!" Bat cried. "I'm a . . . rat! A tree rat!" He coiled his wings closer to his body. He turned his face left to tight to show Alamid his ears, snout, and furry neck.

Alamid only laughed. "That's even better then! Rats are my favorite lunch!"

Bat quickly stretched out his wings. With one sharp claw, he scratched Alamid's face. The mountain cat yelped in pain and loosened his grip on Bat. Taking the opportunity for an escape, Bat flapped until he loosened himself from Alamid's grip. He flew away from Alamid and immediately hid inside a cave. There he stayed until nightfall. Afraid to face the danger of daylight, Bat then decided to fly only at night, away from the prying and hungry eyes of birds and beast.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHOCOLATE HILLS

Bohol Island, Central Visayas Region

Story Note: A tourist spot for locals and foreigners, Bohol never runs out of visitors because of its many popular resorts, beaches, and historical and cultural sites. Chocolate Hills in Bohol is one of these popular destinations. These awe-inspiring hills, close to 100 in number, are unique brown land formations that look like drops of chocolate placed upon the earth. The following tale of two friends, Aloya and Arogo, tells of the Chocolate Hills's origin.

Arogo was a giant who lived in the heavens. Once in a while, he would come down from his home in the skies to explore the world of mortals. It fascinated him to see their creativity and ingenuity expressed in many ways—songs, dances, food, arts and crafts, and their means of survival.

One day, as he was descending from his special resting place in the clouds, he saw a tiny *bangka*, boat, floating on top of the blue sea. It was empty. Curious, he picked it up and held it with both hands.

A popular tourist destination, the Chocolate Hills in Carmen, Bohol, is a must-see for locals and visitors. There are many folk stories about its origin, like the one in this collection, but geologists theorize that the hills were formed from natural forces of fire, water, earth, and air. It took millions of years for these natural forces to work and make what is known worldwide as "Chocolate Hills."

"Where is the human who left this thing?' he asked. Because Arogo was a giant, his voice made the sea waves rise and fall.

"Please!" shouted a small voice from below. "Do not make the waves and the wind play. I am diving for shellfish and catching fish. You're scaring them away with your loud voice."

Arogo was surprised to see a young lady floating nearby. She was not frightened of him.

"Is this a *bangka*?" He asked.

"That is my *bangka* you're holding!" she told him.

Arogo placed the *bangka* near the young lady so she could rest in it for a while. He noticed that she was sad. Her fishing net was empty. Her spear was clean and shiny.

"You did not catch anything," he said. With a bend of his knee and a scoop of his hand underwater, he offered her shrimps, crabs, and an abundance of fish.

When Aloya saw this bounty from the sea, she selected only a few of Arogo's catch and placed them in her small basket.

"Take them all. They are for you!" He stretched his hands forward, offering the catch to her again.

"Thank you. These are all I need. They will be enough." She smiled. She sat down, took her paddle, and slowly drifted away from Arogo. When she reached her house, she did not tell her parents about the giant who helped her fish. People in the village were frightened of them. They treated giants like monsters who must be driven away. Her parents believed the same. Aloya did not want to lose her new friend, Arogo, who had been kind to her.

Days passed, and Arogo waited for Aloya in the same spot where he first saw her. After a week, she was back to fish. The moment she saw Arogo, she smiled at him.

"Your catch lasted for seven days. I would have taken more, but I'm afraid it would have spoiled because there are only three people in my family." She stood up and gave Arogo a garland of hibiscus. It fit his finger like a ring.

"What an interesting gift," he replied. "I'll give you more fish!"

Their exchanges of gifts went on for months. Soon, they were telling each other stories about their people and the lands where they lived. Aloya learned that giants roamed all over the islands. Some lived in caves. Some dwelled in the mountains. A few of the giants prefer the canopy of the forest. Arogo's kind preferred the sky.

Arogo explained, "We're the safe keepers of the elements of your world. My cave-dwelling and mountain-loving kin hold the earth when she rumbles, or else your kind would be buried alive under the ground. The forest giants protect the trees and the animals that live there. My kind carries clouds to and fro to evenly distribute rain. I can also hold lightning in my hands and break it into small forks. Sometimes I miss, and a tree or a hill gets hit. But what can I do? Even giants cannot fully control Mother Nature."

Aloya was amazed by Arogo's stories. The giants were a benevolent kind, and she wished her people could understand their importance to the world. But humans naturally fear what they do not know and understand. Aloya was frightened that telling them about Arogo would cause him harm. She could not bear the thought of her dear friend coming into danger.

Alas, her secret was unearthed when a fisherman from the village saw Aloya talking to Arogo. The fisherman saw Arogo reach under the water. Afraid that Arogo might cause a big wave that would turn over Aloya's *bangka*, he rowed as fast as he could to the shore. He called for Aloya's parents and for every villager. From the top of his lungs he shouted how a giant in the sea was about to eat a village lass. Aloya's parents ran with knives. Men and women took their bolos and bamboo spears. They headed out to the sea on their *bangkas* and charged toward Arogo.

"Aloya! Aloya! We will save you!" cried her parents.

When Aloya saw the crowd, mad and frightened, she stood up on her *bangka* waving her hands high over her head. "No! Stop! He is my friend!" she shouted.

"Move away, Aloya!" one woman shrieked.

"We will kill the beast!" one man boasted.

Aloya urged Arogo to leave immediately. Arogo turned his back and reached for a nearby cloud so he could climb up to safety. The next thing he heard was a cry of pain. Aloya lay dead on

her *bangka*. When the men saw Arogo moving away and climbing up the clouds, they had thrown their bolos and bamboo spears. A bamboo spear had strayed from its mark and hit Aloya in the chest.

Arogo bellowed and pulled his hair. He beat his chest and gnashed his teeth. He blamed himself for Aloya's death. Arogo cried for days. His tears were so heavy that each drop made a dent on the earth, forming small pools in the vast land. An old giant took him away from the sky and hid him under the mountain. When the pools dried up, what was left of the land were mounds of earth that formed and hardened in the sun.

These earth formations became the world famous Chocolate Hills of Bohol.

THE LEGEND OF MOUNT MAYON

Legazpi, Albay, Bicol Region

Story Note: Mount Mayon in Legazpi City, Albay, stands near the domestic airport. Visitors are always awed by the active volcano's majestic beauty. It is known the world over for its perfect cone. On clear days, one can see the full volcano. On cloudy days, one can see only half of the volcano. A local joke is told to first-time visitors that if you catch a glimpse of Mount Mayon in full splendor, you have a clear conscience. Otherwise, your conscience is guilty. Mount Mayon has spawned many stories and legends. Here is a tale about its origin.

Magayon was a giant who was in love with a mortal. She was as beautiful as the sunrise and as gentle as the rain. Magayon pursued her relentlessly. He brought her bountiful harvests from his fields. He fetched her birds of different colors, which would sing her love songs. He presented her with fish from the sea. On moonlit nights, he would pick *sampaguita*, jasmine flowers, and set them on her windowsill.

Sadly, she did not return his affections. She was in love with someone else. When her lover proposed marriage, she accepted. Her parents did not approve of their union because, in their eyes, Magayon the giant gave her everything. They forbade their daughter from seeing her lover. They brought her to the farthest part of town to prevented her lover from seeing her.

Mount Mayon is one of the most active volcanoes in the country. It has erupted 48 times since 1616, its first recorded eruption. Mount Mayon is currently simmering internally in preparation for what scientists predict will be a major volcanic eruption in the future.

The separation did not work, and the strategy proved futile. The young woman's lover was a popular young man who owned a business. Because of this, he was well connected, and he always found a way to trace her whereabouts and find her. The lovers found a way to meet in secret. One night, during one of their trysts, he suggested that they elope.

"But what will we do if we are followed?" she asked.

"I have friends as lookouts and scouts to look after us. They will also waylay anyone who follows us," he replied with confidence.

"The giant Magayon is very strong and my parents like him," she confided.

"Yes, I know," he acknowledged her apprehension. "My friends and I have set a trap for the giant in case he tries to stop us when we flee."

So they made plans. At the agreed-upon time, they eloped. Unbeknownst to them, the girl's parents suspected their plans. They sent word to Magayon days before. He was hurt. He was determined to stop the young man from taking his one true love. On the night of their escape, Magayon was able to thwart all the accomplices waiting on the road. He terrified them! Magayon pressured them into revealing the route the two lovers had taken. In no time, the giant was in hot pursuit of the lovers.

The giant met the two lovers on their way out of town. When they saw him, they quickly took another road. The horse that carried them galloped at full speed, but it was no match for Magayon's huge steps. The earth shook with every step the giant took as he ran after the two lovers. Finally, they reached a deep trench that had been dug weeks before as part of the traps set by the young man's accomplices.

"The horse can no longer run. This is as far as we can go," the young man said. "Across from here is the sea. We do not have a *bangka*, a boat, to cross to the next island."

"I will stay with you no matter what happens," she replied.

Magayon bellowed a deep, mocking laugh. "Give her to me, foolish man!" Magayon shouted.

"No!" the young woman shouted back. "I do not love you!"

"I can give you everything your heart desires!" Magayon reasoned.

"But my heart's only desire is to be with the one I love, and it's not you, Magayon!" she cried, embracing her lover tightly.

Magayon lumbered toward the two lovers. The horse whinnied, frightened by the giant's advances. The young man held on tightly to the reins. Before Magayon could get a hold of them, the young man spurred his horse. It jumped toward Magayon, and the giant hesitated. If he collided with the horse, he would hurt the woman he loved. Magayon lost momentum and was caught off balance as he landed. He fell in the trench with a broken back and a broken heart. The horse that carried the two lovers sped away the moment Magayon collapsed.

Magayon cried in anger. With two mighty fists, he struck the walls of the trench in frustration. Rocks and soil fell on him until he was covered with earth. For days, he lay buried there. No one pulled him out of the deep pit. His cries of anguish and sorrow could be heard for days, but nobody dared to save the giant, fearing his possible wrath. Then one day, the crying and lamentation ceased. Time passed—months, years, and decades. During this time, a mound of earth grew from the trench. shaping into a hill and then into a mountain. In time, the mountain shook and spewed out hot rocks and molten lava, causing the destruction of many fields, houses, and villages.

The locals then believed that the mountain's fury was caused by the giant who died in anger, frustrated and brokenhearted, and trapped in the trench dug for him. They called the mountain Mayon in memory of Magayon, the giant. Some say that he has been sleeping for hundreds of years under the volcano and that he still dreams of his one true love. He has not forgiven, nor has he forgotten her, because to this very day, Mount Mayon remains an active volcano that erupts and unleashes boiling lava from its perfect cone.

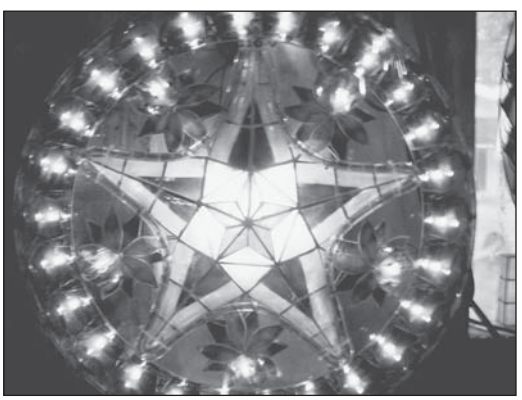
THE LEGEND OF CAINTA

Cainta, Rizal, Southern Tagalog Region

The city of Cainta in Rizal Province has a very interesting legend on how it got its name. Long ago, when Spanish settlers and missionaries began their work on the islands, a good number of them established colonies in different parts of Manila. Towns sprung up one by one near the lake now called Laguna de Bay. At the time of the Spanish colonizers, there lived an immensely rich, old woman named Jacinta in one of these towns.

She was revered by the townspeople. They called her Ka Inta in fondness, for she was generous, charitable, and compassionate. She was the town philanthropist.

She offered her house as temporary refuge to victims of strong typhoons and natural calamities. She opened her kitchen doors to travelers, pilgrims, and even beggars to feed them a good warm meal. She welcomed weary travelers if they had no place to stay for the night. She donated money to the church and hosted many feasts and celebrations for the whole town. She lent money to the poor and provided them with work in her farm and field so that they could pay her back. She treated people like her own family. She never married, though she was beautiful in her younger days. She had dedicated herself to charity work inheriting her parents' religious and benevolent views on life. When they died, they left her everything—a big house, an armada of servants, vast lands, and, rumor had it, coffers of gold.



The *parol* is an ornamental Christmas lantern made from bamboo and Japanese paper. But, more than its decorative purpose, it is a symbol of hope during the season of Advent. For many Catholics in the Philippines, the *parol* is hung over windows and doorways as a light that shines in the home. Modern *parols* are made of *capiz* shells installed with lightbulbs and colored lights. During Christmas, many Parol festivals are celebrated, and festivalgoers are treated to a parade of beautifully handcrafted *parols* made of different materials.

A couple of days before Christmas, Ka Inta puttered around in her big house. She instructed her servants to spruce the place up for the holidays. She ordered her cook to prepare food enough for 100 for the *Noche Buena* feast on Christmas Eve. The fattened pig and calf were destined for roasting. Glutinous rice was prepared for her special sweet rice cake, *bibingka*. Victuals of fish and fowl

were included on the menu. The best *tuba*, palm wine, and *lambanog*, coconut wine, were set out for drinking. The farmhands set aside their plows, spades, and trowels every afternoon to practice their songs and dances. Everyone was so busy!

Ka Inta was busy as well. Inside her room, were hundreds of *parols*, Christmas lanterns. She had been making them for months and would gift them to every person in her town. In a corner, the largest of them all stood unfinished. Bamboo sticks were used to shape and scaffold the lantern into a shape of a star. Japanese paper of red and green covered every side and angle. *Capiz* shells dangled from its two points. If the *parol* were hung outside a window, the shells would clink together when the wind blew. In the middle of the *parol*'s body was an opening where a small candleholder could be placed.

Ka Inta only needed to fashion a tiny transparent door made of white Japanese paper to latch on one side of the small opening. And so, she set off to work.

At dawn, the townspeople who went to the *Misa de Gallo*, the midnight mass, passed by her house. They saw the *parol* for the first time. They marveled at how simply beautiful it looked. With its candlelit center, red and green light radiated from the whole lantern. A light breeze passed, and the *capiz* shells danced, creating little tinkling sounds like dainty glass slippers. Only Ka Inta could have made such a beautiful thing!

Ka Inta was pleased that the townspeople admired the *parol*. As was her tradition, she invited the churchgoers for drink *salabat*, a hot ginger tea, and to eat *bibingka* in her home after mass. Speaking with her neighbors filled her with such warmth and joy. She knew she made the right decision by making *parols* for all of them. She reminded each and every one of her neighbors to join her for *Noche Buena* in two nights' time.

Everyone was abuzz with excitement! Each Christmas meant beautiful gifts from the benevolent Ka Inta. *What surprise awaited them this year?* they asked themselves.

On Christmas Eve, Ka Inta sat on her bed looking out the window. She was ready for Christmas mass, but her chest felt heavy, and her stomach ached. She reclined and closed her eyes.

Outside her big house, friends and neighbors were calling her—

Ka Inta! Ka Inta!

It's time for Misa de Gallo!

Ka Inta! Ka Inta!

We look forward to your aginaldo (gift)!

Her window remained open. Their call was left unheard. One of her servants went up her room and called—

Ka Inta! Ka Inta!

It's time for the Misa de Gallo!

Ka Inta! Ka Inta!

They are excited to receive aginaldo!

No answer came. Worried, the servant opened the door and found Ka Inta on the bed. Scattered in her room were the small lanterns she made for her friends, neighbors, and everyone in the town. She noticed the small paper glued on one point of the *parol*. Written on each paper was the name of every resident of the town.

The servant inched herself closer to Ka Inta. Her eyes were closed, and her hands lay on her stomach. She tried to awaken Ka Inta. It was odd that she was so still. The servant placed one palm near her nose to feel her breath. Then she put a finger on her wrist to feel for her pulse. Nothing.

Her beloved Ka Inta was dead. Their revered philanthropist, Ka Inta, was dead. The townspeople cried—

Ka Inta! Ka Inta!

Why did you leave us at Christmas Eve?

Ka Inta! Ka Inta!

We will remember all your good deeds!

Her servant distributed the *parols* to everyone that Christmas Eve, exactly how Ka Inta had hoped and planned events to fall. Each family's house in the town had a *parol* hanging by the window, a gift from Ka Inta.

That Christmas was a sad one for the townspeople, yet they celebrated for Ka Inta was God's gift to them, and she bathed the town with her spirit and generosity. In memory of their kind benefactor, the townspeople named their town Cainta. To this day, *parols* hang all over the Philippines to celebrate the Christmas season.

THE LEGEND OF LAKE LANAO

Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, Mindanao

Story Note: Lake Lanao is the second-largest freshwater lake in the Philippines. The Maranaos who live in Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte have many stories about how it came to be. One version speaks of angels building the lake, with the archangel Gabriel spearheading it. What are angels doing in a tale that comes from a big Muslim community? One hypothesis points to the influence of the Spanish religious missions in Mindanao. Jesuit clergy established churches in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

St. Francis Xavier, a Jesuit and the patron saint of missions and missionaries, traveled to Asia to convert followers and evangelize the word of God. He reached India, the Molucas, Japan, and Xien Chien. This happened long before the Spaniards attempted to set a sturdy foothold on the Philippine island of Mindanao. St. Francis Xavier never reached the Philippines, but a few fascinating legends about him from Mindanao exist.

As St. Francis Xavier was sailing, his ship was caught in a terrible tempest. Huge waves crashed against his ship, and the crucifix attached to his mast was loosened. A wave engulfed the ship and swallowed the cross in one mighty gulp. St. Francis Xavier was heartbroken by the loss of the cross, for it was very dear to him. He used it in his ministry of evangelization. The cross was the symbol of his love for God.

Francis Xavier was a Jesuit missionary who traversed Asia in the 16th century. He did not reach the Philippines, but his Jesuit brothers did. They established churches and schools on the islands of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Jose Rizal, the national hero, was a product of Jesuit education.

Reaching dry land the following day, he strolled along the beach and found a crab carrying his cross. The crab ran toward him bearing the cross in one big pincer. St. Francis Xavier took his cross and blessed the crab. It scurried quickly back to the sea.

From that time on, the crab and his descendants' shell bore a cross pattern. These crabs are caught in the seas near General Santos City and Davao island. The locals call them the St. Francis Xavier crabs. When the crab is cooked, the cross-like pattern is prominent. Its color is bright red, brighter than the rest of the crab's shell.

Another St. Francis Xavier legend is associated with Lake Lanao.

One day, St. Francis Xavier was taking a leisurely stroll near Lake Lanao, a small lake back

then. His sandal accidentally fell in the lake, and he was unable to retrieve it. The lake, though small, was very deep. St. Francis Xavier gave up the search and went away wearing only one sandal.

In time, the lake grew. It grew and grew into the shape of a sandal! The lake became deeper as well. Local Catholics believe that the sandal shall remain in the lake until all the Muslims in the area are converted to Christianity.

THE LEGEND OF SANTA MARTHA

Pateros, National Capitol Region

Story Note: Pateros is a small town in southeastern metropolitan Manila that is known for its balut *and* alfombra *(slipper) industry.* Balut *is a fertilized duck's egg boiled and is eaten with salt or vinegar. It is a very popular delicacy.* Alfombra*, on the other hand, is a pair of sturdy slippers made from velvet and decorated with beads and bands of different colors. The town of Pateros was once called Aguho during the time of the Spanish colonization because of the* aguho *trees that grow near the bank of the Pateros River. It was also an* embarcadero*, or a port, for the shipping and trading of products that came from Manila via the Pasig River. Chinese, Malay, and Indian migrants and traders settled in Pateros and made the town prosperous for centuries, from around the 1700s until the 1800s. It was the Chinese who introduced the trade and culture of the* balut *industry and* alfombra*-making. They put Pateros on the Philippine map and made* balut *an international sensation.*

Legends tell of a fearsome creature that once dwelled in the Pateros River. This monster took the shape of an enormous crocodile. So ferocious was the crocodile that it terrorized both beast and man. Those who were breeding mallard ducks for *balut* production would often discover their farms and breeding grounds ravaged by the fierce crocodile. One by one, the duck farms fell prey to the crocodile's insatiable appetite. Soon, it went after humans for sustenance.

***Balut* is boiled duck egg. There is a fully formed duckling inside the egg. It is popular for its notorious look when deshelled and its tasty flavor when eaten. *Balut* is a Filipino folk item in its own right. Eating *balut* on a regular basis is believed to give the person powers to detect *aswangs* (vampires) and supernatural beings. It is also believed to be a powerful aphrodisiac.**

The locals tried everything to prevent the crocodile from further devastating their *balut* farms. They set traps that proved ineffective. They kept watch day and night for the crocodile to attack, hoping they could catch it in the act so they could kill it.

After days of waiting, the men in the *barrio*, the neighborhood, heard an alarm from a neighboring duck farm. Some ran on foot by the riverbank. Some rode their *bangkas*, their boats, and swiftly paddled to the scene of alarm. They were horrified to see the enormous black crocodile gnashing its sharp teeth at a young man who held a bamboo spear in his hand. The boy and his small weapon had no chance. The savage crocodile jumped up

took the young man by the head, viciously shaking him from left to right. The boy's blood splattered everywhere. In an instant, the victim was severed in half.

The spectators were frightened to their core. What could their bolos and bamboo spears do to such a formidable and mighty foe? They went back to the safety of their homes, shaking uncontrollably with fear. The mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters had never seen their men react in such a fashion. They fell to their knees and prayed. They prayed for strength. They prayed for safety. They prayed for redemption.

That next night, the crocodile was on another rampage. It smelled the fear permeating from the town and fed on it, strengthening its evil presence. As the beast approached the river bend, it felt the presence of humans waiting. Sure enough, a few brave souls dared to stand ground with snares and traps prepared for the crocodile. They waited with their torches lit and bolos ready. The crocodile feared neither flame nor weapon. When it reached the river bend, it paused, sensing the humans' anxiety. The crocodile opened its wide jaw and snapped down on the bamboo cage blocking its way. A rain of spears targeted the crazed animal. The ones that fell the crocodile's back splintered in two. Other spears fell into the water, like fences surrounding the crocodile. The fence was no match for the massive beast. It wiggled free and swam swiftly toward the riverbank. With a swish of its rocky tail, it was on land snapping after the men who threw the spears.

Suddenly, from a different direction, a spear flew toward the crocodile's belly, but the beast's underside was protected by an unnatural skin that acted like armor. The spear was unable to puncture it. The crocodile swam back to the river to cross the other side as it searched for the new aggressor. Its tail flicked left and right to confuse and distract its pursuer.

Unexpectedly, the night sky lit up, and a beam of light from heaven flashed toward the wild reptile. The crocodile was in the middle of the river. It thrashed in the water, writhing its huge body. From the sky, a beautiful woman descended upon the crocodile. She had long, wavy hair and beautiful dark eyes. She carried a palm leaf in her left hand and a cross in the other. Unafraid, she alighted on the crocodile's back. She glided down its tail like a dancer. The crocodile was unperturbed. She turned around and skipped playfully up its head, where she laid her palm leaf, blessed the crocodile using her cross, and danced about on its monstrous head. She picked up her palm leaf and stood on the crocodile's back.

The men were astounded! They could not believe what they saw.

"Santa Martha of Bethania!" one man shouted. "She has come to save us!"

The men watched as Santa Martha rode the crocodile up to the sky, where, upon reaching the clouds, the heavens closed. All that was left were the flames from their torches. Shocked from the experience, they went back to their families to tell the tale. They regaled the miracle they witnessed. In the morning, the whole town of Pateros was abuzz with the news.

The parish priest was delighted when he heard the news. He arranged for a fluvial parade of Santa Martha's statue. The mayor ordered the brass band to play during the parade. The women prepared food and boiled *balut*. The men cleared and cleaned the river of water lilies. It was a day of thanksgiving and rejoicing.

From then on, every second Sunday of February, a pagoda carried a statue of Santa Martha down the river to the tune of lively music so the townspeople of Pateros could dance the same way that Santa Martha did to tame the ferocious crocodile that once threatened their lives and livelihood.

THE LEGEND OF THE SANTO NIÑO DE CEBU

Cebu, Central Visayas

Story Note: When Ferdinand Magellan discovered the island of Cebu in 1521, he was successful at establishing diplomatic ties with the datu *of the land, Raja Humabon. As a symbol of their friendship, Magellan gave the* datu *the wooden image of the Holy Child Jesus, or the Santo Niño. Forty years or so after, Raja Humabon's hut was burned to ashes, but the image of the soot-blackened image of the Santo Niño survived.*

Every third Sunday of January, Cebuanos and tourists from local shores and abroad celebrate the Sinulog Festival in honor of the black Santo Niño. Many devout Catholics of the island bring candles and palm leaves. They dance the Sinulog alongside the pagoda that carries the black Santo Niño. The dance ends with devotees shouting, "*Pit Señor*!"

This tradition and ritual began at the time when Raja Humabon's jester, Baladhay, fell ill. It was a strange illness. The clown would neither eat nor drink. Fever attacked his usually strong and healthy body. He was confined to his room for days. When Raja Humabon heard of this, he asked his wife, Hara Amihan, to find out what could make Baladhay healthy and strong once more.

Hara Amihan sent her servants for Baladhay. They had to convince him that the *datu* and his wife were very much concerned for his well-being that they wanted him to stay in their house. "But that is the royal house of the *datu*. I am only needed there for entertainment. I cannot even move a limb!" cried Baladhay.

"Hara Amihan has called for the medicine woman, Baladhay! The *datu* and his wife sent us for you. It is his orders. Come with us!" one of the servants reprimanded Baladhay.

"Aaaaay! My body is in pain! I cannot move. Perhaps you can carry me in a hammock," Baladhay dramatically replied.

So the servants fashioned a hammock from cloths and blankets they found in Baladhay's house. Using a long pole of bamboo, they carried the hammock with Baladhay in it.

Upon reaching the royal house, the servants brought Baladhay to Hara Amihan, who was overcome with concern at the sight of her favorite court jester.

"What could have made you so ill, Baladhay?" she asked.

"Your majesty, Hara Amihan, I do not know. I think I am going to die!" Baladhay cried.

Hara Amihan ordered her servants to prepare the guest room. The servants obeyed her but with long, sour faces. Baladhay was one of the best jesters in the court of Raja Humabon, but he was also the better actor.

When the room and bed were ready, Baladhay rested. He was surprised, though, when a servant entered and placed the image of the Holy Child Jesus on the bed's side. Baladhay did not quite like this image from the foreigner, Magellan. This foreign image was too fair and too fancy.

"Raja Humabon ordered the messengers to fetch the medicine woman. He also asked me to bring this image into your room to protect you while you sleep," the servant informed the sick Baladhay.

"Thank you. And please tell the *datu* how compassionate a ruler he is for sending me a guardian as I sleep. I am still feverish, you see."

"Hmmm . . ." was the servant's mere reply.

The instant she left, Baladhay turned his back on the statue and slept soundly.

Baladhay dreamt of green fields and verdant hills. He saw coconut trees in the distance and heard the sound of water. For a better view, he ran on top of a hill and saw coconut trees swaying left and right. There was no wind, but the trees seemed to dance. Beyond the dancing coconut trees was the blue sea. Its waves danced as well, to and fro, back and forth. He was giddy at the sight of it all. He went near the trees. The palm leaves tickled his face. He closed his eyes to enjoy the tickling sensation that brought him to childish giggles.

When he opened his eyes, he saw a child with fair skin and curly hair holding a palm leaf and dusting it over his face. Baladhay sneezed. The child laughed and continued to tickle Baladhay's nose with a left and right movement. Baladhay sneezed again.

"Stop it!" he shouted. "It's not fun anymore!"

Baladhay grabbed the palm leaf from the child and attempted to do the same to him. But the child was quick to take one big step backward. Baladhay stood up and took two steps forward reaching for the child's face. The child surprisingly skipped two steps forward at Baladhay. For a moment it would have appeared that they would collide, but he took two steps backward in fear that he would hurt the little boy.

The child laughed and skipped two steps back again and made one small step forward. Baladhay straightened up himself.

"Ah! So you want to play!" Baladhay roared.

Holding the palm leaf, he took two steps back and one step forward. The child took his turn until they were gracefully doing a dance.

Suddenly the door burst open. It was the *datu*, Raja Humabon, his wife, and the medicine woman followed by a couple of servants bearing herbs and oil. They saw Baladhay waving a palm leaf and doing a strange but graceful dance. The *datu* and his wife were puzzled.

"Baladhay!" the *datu* shouted. "What illness has befallen you?"

"Your Majesty!" Baladhay broke from his reverie and stopped dancing. He bowed low. His cheeks flushed.

"Have you gone insane? Has fever taken over your mind that you are now dancing by yourself?" Hara Amihan asked.

"My queen, there was a child with me in this room. He was playing with me and we ended up doing this crazy but graceful dance, moving back and forth, back and forth!" Baladhay explained.

"What child?" Hara Amihan asked. "The *datu* had the image of the Holy Child placed here to look after you, Baladhay, but not to dream strange dreams!"

At the mention of dreams, Baladhay told them about his dream and how the child appeared in his room, waving a palm leaf and teaching him how to dance. It was too strange for the royal couple to comprehend. But the medicine woman walked to the bedside and took the image of the Holy Child. She showed this to Baladhay.

"Tell me, Baladhay. Did the child you see look like this image given to the *datu*?"

"Yes!" Baladhay affirmed. "It was him."

"Then, Baladhay, the child has cured you. Let us dance the way you did as taught by the child for he has done a miracle!" the medicine woman exclaimed.

And so Baladhay, the court jester of Humabon, danced the graceful dance that they called *sinulog*. He taught everyone in the kingdom of Humabon the *sinulog*, and this became a tradition that continued to live on till this very day. *Pit Señor!*

MELU AND TAU TANA: CREATION STORY FROM THE B'LAANS

South Cotabato and Davao del Sur, Mindanao

Long before there were people, there was Melu who inhabited the sky. There was Tau Tana, too, who lived below it. Between them was nothingness.

Melu was so huge that when he sat on a cloud, he occupied the entire sky. He had golden teeth so that every time he flashed a smile, the whole sky brightened. He was also very white because he rubbed his whole body with his hands. His dead skin lay in a pile like a range of mountains.

One day, he was so annoyed by it that he turned his dead skin into earth. He laid the new earth between his home in the sky and Tau Tana's. A few of the clumps of his dead skin remained, so he created small images to his likeness.

When Tau Tana learned of this, he offered his assistance to Melu.

"I am nearly finished, Tau Tana. See? All I need to put is a nose for these little creatures," Melu said.

"But I can do that!" Tau Tana replied. He picked a lump of Melu's dead skin and made a nose. Melu allowed Tau Tana to help. They placed a nose on each person, but the noses were upside down and located between the eyebrows. They breathed life into the little people so they could move about on earth. Tau Tana went back to his world. Melu did the same.

Melu was satisfied at their creation, seeing the people inhabit the earth. But, when a great rain fell, the little people almost drowned because water ran into their noses. Melu immediately came down from the sky to reverse all their noses and place the nostrils facing the ground. They were saved from drowning.

The people begged Melu to create more of their likeness so that they could have company, explore the earth, and inhabit new lands. Melu granted their and created more people. That was how, according to the B'laans, the world came to be.

LIMOKON'S CHILDREN: CREATION STORY FROM THE MANDAYAS

Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental Mindanao

The Limokon, powerful creatures who looked like birds but could speak the language of men, dwelt near the Mayo River. One of them laid an egg near a river upstream. She then flew down stream and laid another egg there.

In time, the eggs hatched.

Out of the egg from upstream came a woman, brown and beautiful with black flowing hair. Out of the egg from downstream came a man, brown and strong with a confident smile. They explored their worlds—she in the upstream part of the river and he in the downstream end of it.

The man was lonely and often wondered what existed upriver. The woman was lonely too and often thought of what she might find if she swam downstream. But fear of the unknown kept them in their safe territories.

One day, the man was fishing in a shallow part of the river when his feet were caught entangled with some floating river weed. The current was so strong that it dragged him to the deep end of the river. Had he not untied his feet in time, he would have drowned.

Upon close examination, the river weed turned out to be strands of black hair. Excited to find another being like him, he ran beside the river, upstream. There he found the woman. They were both glad to have found each other. At last, they were no longer alone.

They married and had children who populated the banks and territories near the Mayo River. To this day, they live there and are known as the Mandayas.

THE IGOROT STORY OF CREATION

Cordillera Autonomous Region

The Great Spirit, Lumawig, came down from heaven and walked the earth. He found that it was empty of people. So, he cut reeds that grew by the river and bundled them up in groups. He dried them under the heat of the sun, and when the reeds were brown, he untied them. He laid them on the ground in pairs.

"Speak!" Lumawig commanded.

Each pair of reeds became man and woman, and they spoke. But each pair spoke a different language.

Lumawig was glad. He married each of the pair in a ceremony that bound them to make children. He gave each pair a place to live so they could grow families. In time, Lumawig's people had children who learned to speak the language of their parents. Thus, the earth had many peoples living in it.

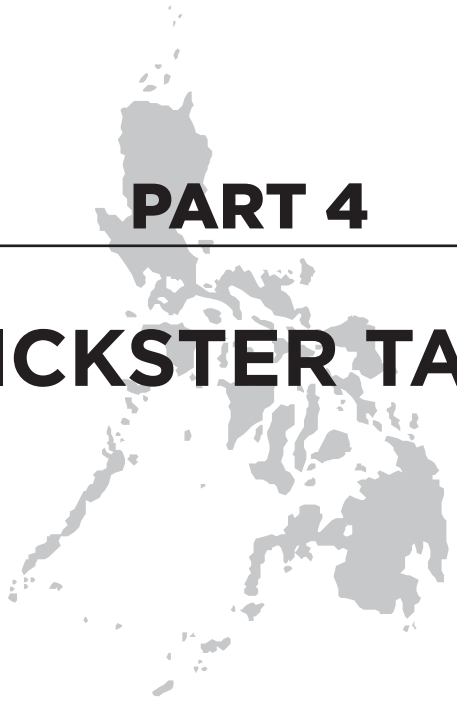
Later, Lumawig realized that he needed to provide for their basic needs. He created salt and then gave this to one group of people. He taught them how to boil salt down. But they did not understand Lumawig's instructions, so they let the salt be. When Lumawig returned, he was upset to find the salt untouched. He took the salt and went to the people of Mayinit, where he set out instructions on how to boil it down.

The people of Mayinit followed the instructions correctly, and they became owners of the salt. They sold the salt to their neighbors so they too would benefit from Lumawig's gift.

Lumawig set forth to Bontoc. He gathered red soil and tried to teach the people of Bontoc how to create pottery. Lumawig fashioned beautiful clay jars. He showed them how to make the clay jars so they could sell it to other peoples. But they failed to understand Lumawig's procedures, so their jars ended up misshapen.

Disappointed, Lumawig shared the techniques of clay jar making with the Samoki people, who understood the craft and performed it very well. The people of Bontoc had no choice but to buy jars from the Samoki.

This was how Lumawig took care of his own people. This was how the Igorot people learned their ways from the Great Spirit, Lumawig. Pleased with the Igorot people, Lumawig eventually married an Igorot woman and lived among the people of the earth.



PART 4

TRICKSTER TALES

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JUAN TAMAD AND THE RICE POT

Batangas, Southern Tagalog Region

Juan Tamad was upset. He had been lying the whole morning on the grass under the mango tree with his mouth wide open, waiting for the mango fruit to fall in. However, a *maya* bird came and pecked on the mango fruit he coveted. It was an Indian mango, red, round, and ripe. Juan was too lazy to climb or pick the fruit himself.

So he stood up and took the path that led home. His stomach rumbled. It was nearly noon. Lunchtime! His last meal was breakfast, hours ago. He cranky and hungry. As he traveled, he smelled something tasty. The scent penetrated his nose and teased his stomach.

"Hmmm . . ." he sniffed. "*Adobo*! *Stewed chicken*!"

"Hmmm . . ." he sniffed again. "Steamed rice!"

He followed the smell. It led him to the doorstep of Aling Nena, his neighbor. He knocked on the door and called for her. There was no answer. "Where could Aling Nena be?" he asked. "She's a good friend of my mother's. She's like an aunt to me. I am sure she won't mind if I come in."

He let himself in the house and walked straight into the kitchen. On his way there, he noticed that a door in one room was left ajar. He took a peek. He saw a rattan hammock. Hunger won over curiosity, so he quickly tiptoed away and into the kitchen. There, he saw a pot filled with steamed rice. Beside it was a *kawali*, a pan, of *adobo*.

"Oh, this means lunch!" Juan shouted with glee. He took a spoon and a plate from a nearby *paminggalan*, a pantry. Just as he was about to get a spoonful of *adobo* and rice, he heard a baby's cry.

He dropped his kitchen utensils and ran to the room where the door was left ajar. There, in the hammock, lay a crying baby. Juan picked up the baby and lulled her to sleep. As he cradled her, he sang—

"Aya, ayayayaya Neneng!
Meme na!
Aya, ayayayaya Neneng!
Meme na!"

In no time, the baby was asleep. Juan laid her back in the hammock. He ran back to the kitchen and again began to serve himself *adobo* and rice. Just as he was about to get a spoonful of *adobo* and rice from the rice pot, he heard the baby's cry again.

He dropped his kitchen utensils and ran toward the room where the door was left ajar. There, in the hammock, lay the baby still crying. Juan picked up the baby again and lulled her to sleep. As he cradled her, he sang—

"Aya, ayayayaya Neneng!
Meme na!
Aya, ayayayaya Neneng!
Meme na!"

Then the baby fell asleep once more. Juan laid her back in the hammock. He ran back to the kitchen and began to serve himself *adobo* and rice. Just as he was about to get a spoonful of *adobo* and rice, he heard the baby's cry again.

He dropped his kitchen utensils and ran again to the room where the door was left ajar. Once more, Juan picked up the baby and lulled her to sleep. As he cradled her, he sang—

"Aya, ayayayaya Neneng!
Meme na!
Aya, ayayayaya Neneng!
Meme na!"

Finally, the baby closed her eyes and fell asleep. He was about to lay the baby back to her hammock when the door opened. In the doorway stood Aling Nena, with her hands on her hips and a stern look on her face. "*Naku*! Goodness! I shouldn't have left my *apo*, my grandchild!" she fussed. Juan was nervous. Aling Nena did not look pleased.

"But it's a good thing you're my neighbor, Juan. Thank you so much for looking after Neneng while I was away!" Aling Nena beamed at him.

"Lay her back down in the hammock, Juan, and follow me to the kitchen. I'll give you a bowl of *adobo* and a plate of steamed rice. Bring it home and share it with your mother. I'm sure you will both enjoy my cooking!"

Juan went home happy, with a bowl of *adobo* in one hand and a plate of steamed rice in the other.

INUG-AY AND THE *DAYAP* FRUIT

Mountain Province, Cordillera Autonomous Region

Inug-ay, a naughty and mischievous boy, saw a *dayap* tree. He picked all the fruit from the tree. Ripe and unripe fruit, he gathered them all. He placed them inside a basket and then went home.

He ate all the fruit of the *dayap* tree. Ripe and unripe fruit, he ate them all. He patted his tummy, big and bulging, full from all those *dayap* fruit.

Ripe and unripe fruit, his tummy was full. In the evening, his belly ached. Oh, how it ached! Inug-ay moaned! Inug-ay groaned! He moaned and groaned so loud that three old women and the medicine man came rushing to see what was wrong.

The three old women and the medicine man surrounded Inug-ay. They leaned close to his bulging belly, examining its rotund shape. Suddenly, Inug-ay's stomach rumbled like a roaring waterfall, and he broke wind.

The foul stench swirled around the three old women and the medicine man. It engulfed them and permeated their lungs. They coughed. They sputtered. They wretched. They felt sour inside and out. All of the sudden, the women and the medicine man turned into lemons. Inug-ay laughed and laughed and laughed until his belly burst.

PILANDOK GOES TO MARKET

Maranao, Mindanao, Southern Tagalog Region

Story Note: Pilandok *is the local term for "mousedeer." In Malaysia and Singapore, it is known as Sankantjil. The mousedeer is an evasive and elusive animal that moves swiftly in the forests of Southeast Asia. Local folktales depict Pilandok as a trickster who can weave his way in and out of trouble. In this tale, however, Pilandok is characterized as a willful and foolish man bound to commit mistakes and failures. This numbskull tale bears similarity to Juan Tamad and Juan Tanga of the Tagalogs in Luzon. The Maranaos have created their own version through Pilandok, their beloved village idiot.*

Pilandok was a hardworking but half-witted man. One day, Bagoaraga, his wife, asked him to go to the market to buy salt. He was more than willing. He liked doing errands for his wife, as it gave him the chance to leave her watchful eye and nagging ways.

So, he took a small basket and went to market. There, he bought the whitest and finest of salt. The salt vendor made a cone out of banana leaves and filled it with salt. Pilandok paid the vendor a good sum, for the salt was a good buy.

In spite of the malls that mushroom in the metropolis and progressive provinces, markets are still the hubs of trade and commerce for the common Filipino. It is a place where one can find anything and everything. The journey and the experience of going to the market makes it a uniquely Filipino way of life. At the market, one engages in social interaction with the seller, the baker, the butcher, neighbors, and friends. The market is a place of community.

On his way home, Pilandok took the road near the river. It had been a very hot day. He dropped his basket by the riverbank, rolled his pants up to his knees, and waded into the cool water. Immediately, he felt relief from the heat. It felt so good that he stayed in the water a little longer. Soon, children from a nearby village came by. They saw Pilandok and his basket by the riverbank.

"What is inside your basket?" one boy asked.

"Salt from the market," Pilandok replied.

The boy peered into his basket. "The banana leaf is unfolded!" he shouted.

Pilandok rushed to his basket to see that the boy's observation had been right.

"Poor salt," Pilandok sighed. "They must have opened the funnel, as it is very hot. How

selfish of me not to invite the salt to wade in the water. I think it wants to go home ahead of me."

Pilandok took out the funnel-shaped banana leaf where the salt was kept. He laid it on the water to float and to cool off a bit. He watched the current wash the banana leaf away.

"Yes, go home to my wife!" Pilandok shouted. "I will follow!"

He took off his shirt and hung it on a tree branch. He dived into the cool water of the river and joined the children in their mid-morning bath. A strong gust of wind blew. His shirt fell into the river. Like the banana leaf, it washed away as well.

Pilandok saw what happened to his shirt. He merely shrugged and told himself, "Ah, it will follow the salt and the banana leaf. It will reach home."

By noon, Pilandok ended his bathing. He felt refreshed and relaxed. He headed for home. When he reached his house, a furious Bagoaraga greeted him at the doorstep.

"Where have you been all this time?!" she exclaimed. "And why are you half naked?"

"I took a bath in the river," he replied.

"And where is the salt I told you to buy?" she demanded.

Pilandok told Bagoaraga everything that had happened by the riverbank earlier.

"Ay, you nitwit! You lost a good shirt and a package of good salt from the market!" Bagoaraga yelled irritably at Pilandok. "Now we have no salt for our meat or for our preserves. You will eat tasteless food until we have enough money to buy salt again!"

Pilandok had the worst tongue-lashing episode from Bagoaraga in the days and nights that followed. The next time he went to the market for salt, you can be sure he did not stop to bathe!

THE DEER, THE WITCH, AND ALIMAUNG

Davao del Sur, Mindanao

Story Note: The Bagobos of Davao del Sur believed in the existence of a rare wild dog, the alimaung. *It is quicker and more evasive than the mousedeer. None other than the Bagobos have seen it. Once upon a time, however, the* alimaung *freely roamed the forests of Davao.*

One day, Alimaung dreamed that he would eat the liver of a deer and he would live a long life as a result. Deer, on the other hand, dreamed that Alimaung would eat her liver and she would die very soon. Afraid, Deer ran for help. On her way to seek help, she met Alimaung on the road. She shivered with fear.

"Deer, come and let's have a chat,'" Alimaung greeted Deer.

"No. I dreamed that you would eat my liver," Deer replied. Then she ran away as quickly as she could. Alimaung ran after Deer. He was gaining speed, but Deer's will to live was greater than Alimaung's desire to eat her liver. Deer ran as fast as the wind, but Alimaung would not give up the chase.

In the distance, Deer saw a *nipa* hut, a small bamboo house. Beside it was a well. Sitting by the well was an old crone chewing betel nuts.

"Grandmother!" Deer called. "The wild dog, Alimaung, is at my heels! He will eat my liver!"

Grandmother replied, "Go inside my hut and hide yourself!"

Deer did as she was instructed. When Alimaung arrived by the well, he was furious.

"Where is the deer, Witch?!" Alimaung spat at the old woman.

"What deer are you talking about? I have been sitting here the whole morning, and you are the first four-legged creature to come by," the old woman replied.

"That deer will give me long life if I eat her liver," Alimaung said.

The old woman cackled, "Baaah! Alimaung, come to the well. Take a peek."

Alimaung did as he was instructed and saw his reflection.

"That's the head of one of your kind. I have eaten his liver, you know. If you don't give up chase on Deer, it is your liver that will be eaten!" The old woman smacked her lips. She smiled at Alimaung, revealing her crooked brown teeth.

Alimaung ran away frightened. He rested near spring of water. He drank, and it refreshed him. Still, the old witch and her words haunted him.

Monkey came by. He saw Alimaung shaking by the spring of water. Monkey asked him what had happened, and Alimaung narrated his dream, the chase, and the old witch's curse.

"That's not a curse. I call it a trick," Monkey told Alimaung. "I will accompany you to the witch's hut. Let's go!"

Monkey went up Alimaung's back and tied his tail on Alimaung's. When they reached the old woman's hut, she was still there, sitting by the well chewing betel nuts.

"Baaah! You returned and brought a friend, Alimaung!" The old woman flashed her brown teeth at her visitors.

"Where is the deer you've hidden?" Monkey boldly asked the old woman.

"Look at the well," the old woman simply replied.

"No! That well has everything she's killed and eaten!" Alimaung cried. He ran away from the well and the witch, who frightened him so. He dragged Monkey as he ran. Monkey's head hit a stone and then a big root of the *balete* tree, where it broke open and bled. When Alimaung reached the spring of water, Monkey was dead. Alimaung untied his tail from Monkey's. He retreated deep into the forest.

The old woman called for Deer to leave her hiding place.

"Thank you, Grandmother. I owe you my life," Deer said to her protector.

"Life is precious indeed. But to survive this life, being fast is not enough. You must have the smarts and the wits to live. Go now! We have seen the last of Alimaung." Grandmother gently touched Deer's head. She stood up, spat out the chewed betel nut, and went inside her hut.

THE ADVENTURES OF JUAN POSONG

Cebu, Central Visayas

There was once a greedy and cruel *datu*. He demanded huge and exorbitant tributes from his people. He lived a life of luxury and extravagance while his people suffered in poverty. Many had tried to stir a revolution against the *datu*, but none had been triumphant.

One of the *datu*'s people was a young man named Juan Posong. He believed that brawn and force were not the solution to rid the people of the *datu*'s tyranny. *It never worked before, so why would it work now?* he thought. Juan Posong had heard stories from merchants across the sea about rulers, kings, and emperors who, like their own *datu*, were so blinded by power they paid no mind to the needs of their people. Juan Posong paid attention to these stories and how these men were so overcome by their greed that it led to their eventual demise. He wondered if the *datu* was like these powerful but stupid men.

Juan Posong took his time and formulated a plan. He observed routines of the *datu*'s men, the *datu*'s comings and goings, and the business that went on around the small island. He identified three things that were so dear to the *datu*—his cattle herd, his daughter, and his gold!

Then he set his plan in motion. Juan Posong crept into the royal cattle herd one dark night and cut off all the cows' tails. He opened the cattle pens, and one by one the cattle ran into the dark night. At dawn, the cattle herder found all cattle tails half buried in the ground. When the *datu* found out, he ordered the cattle herder's head cut off. On the day of the cattle herder's execution, Juan Posong bravely announced the innocence of the cattle herder. The *datu* was incensed. Juan Posong was quick to weave a story.

"Forgive me for intruding, my dear *datu*, but I can bring all your cattle back, for I have the gift of animal speech. I can talk to different animals," Juan Posong told the *datu*.

"Then do as you claim. If you fail, your head will be next!" the datu said angrily.

"But if I am successful, I deserve a price," Juan Posong immediately retorted.

"Of course. I am fair," the *datu* replied.

"I require your daughter's hand in marriage, dear *datu*. That is the price you will pay when I return your cattle." Juan Posong said.

The *datu* was quiet for a few seconds, then, in front of his own people, he gave his word and agreed to young man's foolish deal. He sent his soldiers to look for the cattle while Juan Posong ran to his old reclusive friend who lived by the foot of a hill. The recluse released all of the *datu*'s cattle, and Juan Posong thanked his friend for keeping them safe for a few days and nights.

Juan Posong rode atop a cattle that led the herd back to the *datu*. The *datu* had mixed emotions. On the one hand, he was glad to have his cattle herd back. On the other hand, he was horrified at the thought of allowing his daughter to marry a common peasant like Juan Posong. He fulfilled his word, but he ordered an emissary to investigate.

On the day of the engagement party, the datu's daughter sat near her future husband.

"There must be something very special about you, Juan Posong, to outsmart my father. Come to my room tonight. I will wait for you," the *datu*'s daughter whispered.

It was an invitation Juan Posong found hard to resist. It certainly validated that his plan of winning the favor of the *datu*'s daughter had been successful.

That night, when he came to the room of his fiancé, he found her lying languidly on the bed. Her golden chastity cover was exposed to the light. Juan Posong felt warm all over, but his hands were cold. When he touched her fiancé's face, he was shaking.

"Oh my, Juan Posong," she said, "Your hands are cold. Place them on my belly."

He did, but his hands remained cold. He was trembling still.

"It's warmer below my belly, under my chastity cover, Juan Posong. There your hands can rest," she whispered.

He did as he was told. He shook and trembled even more. A warm feeling soon enveloped Juan Posong, and this delighted his future wife. She kissed him, and he kissed her back. They slept together in blissful oblivion.

In the morning, they were awakened by loud knocks. Soldiers of the *datu* barged into the room and took Juan Posong away. He only had one glance at his fiancé's face, her chastity cover clutched in his hand. The *datu*'s emissary learned of Juan Posong's tricks. The *datu* was raving mad, so he sent his soldiers to jail Juan Posong in a cage by the sea. There he waited for the soldiers to throw him into the sea's depths.

Juan Posong did not lose hope, though. He knew that the trading season had begun. Traders and merchants had started frequenting the island. When one merchant saw Juan Posong trapped in the cage, he took pity on him. Juan Posong told the merchant that he was engaged to the *datu*'s daughter. Yet he did not want to marry her. That was why he was imprisoned. He told the merchant that he was given the whole day to change his mind but that it was unlikely because Juan Posong wanted to live a trader's life. He showed him the chastity cover that the *datu*'s daughter had given him.

"You're a merchant who has traveled these islands. I bet you are wealthy with stories, with experiences, and with gold," Juan Posong lamented.

The merchant said, "Well, a few gold nuggets from the land of the Moros are no easy feat to acquire, but a life of royalty is something else. What if we exchange roles? After all, we have the same skin and hair color. We have the same look akin to the island people. I'll let you out and take your place."

Juan Posong agreed, and the merchant released him. Juan Posong and the merchant exchanged clothing. He thanked the merchant, then quickly ran to the merchant's boat, where he found silk, several pieces of *kris*, a casket of gold nuggets, shiny pearls, and precious shells. He initially thought of sailing away to the next island, but another idea formed in his head.

While the soldiers went about their business of drowning the caged Juan Posong, the real Juan Posong sailed to the other side of the island to hide and wait till morning.

The following day, Juan Posong went to the *datu*'s court dragging the merchant's boat behind him. Everyone was amazed to see him alive. The *datu*'s daughter was so surprised that she fainted. The *datu* looked at Juan Posong with fear.

"I came back from the dead, my dear *datu*," Juan Posong boasted, "and I bring you these treasures from the sea." He uncovered the boat to reveal the merchant's wares. The greedy *datu* ogled the gold nuggets, shiny pearls, and precious shells. He had forgotten all logic at the sight of the treasures Juan Posong presented.

"I want you to bring me there! To the sea where you have been!" the *datu* exclaimed.

"All you have to do is ask your soldiers to lower you down into the sea, in the same spot where you drowned me," Juan Posong replied.

He added, "I have been touched by royalty. That's why I did not die. I saw these treasures on the seabed like an offering. A *datu* like you could get more."

"Yes! Yes! Soldiers!" the *datu* called. "Bring me to the sea! Throw me into its depths!"

The soldiers did as they were bid. The *datu* drowned and was never heard from again. Juan Posong immediately left the island kingdom, for he knew it would fall into disarray and despair. He rode the boat and sailed for the land of the Moros to seek his fortune. A couple of days later, Juan Posong spied another boat following him. It was the *datu*'s daughter.

Together, they sailed from one island to another. Stories circulated the islands of the archipelago about a young and daring couple who earned their wealth and riches not by trading or business but by wit and cunning.

PART 5

SCARY STORIES

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THE PASSENGER

Quezon City, National Capitol Region

The rain was unrelenting. A young woman stood wet and weary on a street corner. She was in a hurry to get home before midnight. The old church that stood across the street where she had been waiting for a ride home held an ancient clock.

11:30. Thirty minutes to midnight, it read.

She had to be home by midnight. Absolutely.

Two lights flickered in the distance. As the lights approached, she saw a sign on the car. "TAXI." She raised one arm to hail it.

The taxi driver saw the young woman immediately despite the heavy downpour that blurred the car's windshield. He was on his way home. Thoughts of hot coffee and *pandesal*, that sweet bread, teased his stomach, which had been empty since early that evening. Although he was reluctant to stop for the passenger, the taxi driver could not bear to see her so cold and wet, soaked to the bone and so pale.

He rolled the window down for a better look. The young woman was more than just pale. Her terrified eyes amplified her white complexion. She peered into the open window. Though the taxi's air conditioning was set at low, it suddenly grew icy cold.

"Balete Drive," said the woman in a shaky, faraway voice. Her hollow words resounded in the taxi driver's head. Something felt wrong, but he dismissed his thoughts. Taking pity on her, he unlocked the car door. Rolling the windows up, he waited for her to get in, listening for the sound of the car door to slam shut. But he heard nothing. When he turned around, she was already comfortably seated. The taxi door was closed.

Goose bumps crawled from his neck down his arms. He glanced at the mirror. Her rain-soaked hair dripped into her lap. She bent her head low, hiding her eyes.

"Please. I need to be home by midnight," she urged, almost in a whisper.

The taxi driver wished he had a clean towel or handkerchief to give her. Her street was just a few blocks away.

"Even in this rain, we can reach your street in 15 minutes," he assured her. "The drive is usually quicker but with this storm . . ." His voice trailed off. "I'm sure we'll get there in time."

The woman did not answer. She stayed unnervingly quiet the entire ride. The taxi driver could not wait to get home. *Lucky*, he said to himself, *the area is the district of Manila's old rich*. He looked forward to a good tip.

When they reached Balete Drive, he asked for the number of her house.

"It's the old white house to the left of Seventh Street," she replied.

He parked the car in front of the big iron gate.

"Please wait and keep your meter running. I lost my purse in the rain." He turned around to respond, but when he looked back, she was gone. He saw that the big iron gate was ajar. His eyes must have deceived him. He could not believe how fast it had happened. Nevertheless, he waited.

Three minutes. Five minutes. The rain slowly receded, fading as midnight approached.

Ten minutes.

If this is a joke, he thought, *it's not funny*.

Impatient and anxious to collect his cab fare, he bounced out of the car. Keeping his manners and wits intact, he pressed the doorbell despite the fact that the gate was slightly open. The driver peered through the opening and saw what appeared to be an expansive lawn. In a moment, an older lady who strikingly resembled his passenger greeted him with an umbrella and a warm smile at the gate.

"I'm so sorry, *manong*, kind sir," she said. "How much is it?"

"It's nearly a hundred pesos. I waited for 10 minutes."

"Here, *manong*." She handed him the money. "There's an extra 100 pesos for all the trouble."

He was right. A hefty tip. "Thank you. She has a curfew, I suppose. She was in such a hurry to get home."

The old woman nodded.

The taxi driver asked, "May I please use your restroom before I go?"

"Of course," she answered. She led him to the big house and into an anteroom.

She pointed. "First door to your left."

On his way to the restroom, he saw a large portrait of his passenger. Strangely, there were two lit candles and fresh yellow daisies beneath the picture. He turned to the older lady who was standing by the door, her wet umbrella dripping on the floor forming a pool of rainwater. He felt the goose bumps again, dancing up and down his arms.

She gazed at the portrait. "That's my daughter, Isabella. It's the anniversary of her death." She said matter-of-factly. "It happens every year. You're not the first."

The taxi driver's urge to use the restroom had vanished. When he realized who his passenger was, he became numb and immobile like a stone sculpture. Outside, the rain stopped abruptly, and the grandfather clock, somewhere in the big house, signaled the midnight hour.

NARDONG AGIMAT

Cavite, Southern Tagalog Region

When Nardo was a young man, he wanted to achieve two things: invincibility and a long life. Tandang Cario, his next-door neighbor, filled his head with tales of heroes and their heroic deeds. This made heroes, in Nardo's eyes, larger than life. He was fascinated by the tales of men who could swallow bullets and magic mud. He was enthralled at the stories of mortals fighting *engkantos* (ancestral spirits), *dwendes* (dwarfs), *nuno sa punso* (anthill dwarf), and *aswangs* (vampires). He marveled at the story of a boy named Miong whose friendship with a *kapre* (tree demon) afforded him a long life. Miong lived to be a hundred and a decade years old. History books spoke of Miong's sturdy and extraordinary genes as the reason for his longevity. The books did not mention the supernatural friendship he had with an elemental being.

But Nardo believed the colorful tales of his dear friend, Tandang Cario, more than the dry narrations of old historians.

One secret to long life, according to Nardo's grandfather, was to acquire an *agimat*, an amulet that would make the bearer invincible. Some could be purchased. Others were bequests that needed *orasyon*, or prayers, during certain times of the day. But one *agimat* could be acquired from the *mutya*, or essence of the banana pod's heart.

The banana heart may be an object of folklore, but it also finds its way to the dinner table. Chopped with its sticky sap squeezed out, it is boiled in coconut milk and flavored with pork or shrimp. The dish known as *Ginataang Puso ng Saging* is a delicious treat.

Young Nardo asked Tandang Cario how the *mutya* could be obtained.

"You really want it?" Tandang Cario questioned.

"Why not, Lolo Cario? If it will make me strong and invincible, then I could help my family and spend many years with them!" he answered.

Tandang Cario laughed. "You are young indeed, and you still need to learn more about the laws of nature and the universe. A man who possesses an *agimat* can go astray, Nardo. Bearing an *agimat* means carrying a big responsibility. Besides, it chooses to whom it will give itself."

"You could have taken the *mutya*, Lolo Cario, since you know so much," Nardo mocked the old man. "Perhaps you were not the chosen one!"

"You impertinent little rascal!" Tandang Cario yelled. "I do not need any *agimat* to live this long. A long life could be a curse. Having an *agimat* and living forever is a double curse. I could welcome death anytime soon," Tandang Cario said to Young Nardo.

But the young, brave, and foolish Nardo persisted until Tandang Cario gave in. Young Nardo learned how to find the *mutya* from his old neighbor. The summer of his twenty-first year, Nardo made plans to find the *mutya* and possess the *agimat* inside. Soon after Tandang Cario shared the instructions, he died in his sleep.

On his planned night of adventure, when the summer moon was at its fullest, Nardo courageously set forth with a gas lamp and a bolo at his side. He walked several streets down from his house and entered the village near the forest. He passed by the church and the town cemetery. He reached the farm of Tandang Nena and Tandang Emong. A few more meters, and he stood at the forest's threshold.

He held his lamp above his head. The moon was bright, but he needed to count the trees to locate the banana plant where the *mutya* could be taken.

"Narra. Manga. Santol . . ." Nardo whispered as he walked.

Already, the sounds coming from the forest disturbed him. Yet he remembered Tandang Cario's instructions—

Stay focused.

Hold on to the light.

Look for the moon in the sky and stop when it hides behind a cloud.

Nardo continued. He was determined to get the *mutya*.

"Anahaw. Langka. Niyog . . ."

He came upon a meadow where grass and bushes grow. In the middle of the field, there stood a grove of banana plants. Nardo's heart beat faster inside his chest. He ran toward the banana grove and held his lamp above his head. He looked for the banana plant that bore a banana pod. In the back of the grove was a lone banana plant. It was exactly what Nardo was looking for.

He walked toward the plant and positioned himself under the banana pod. He waited until the pod opened. Out of the pod came a drop as bright as crystal.

"The *mutya*!" Nardo gasped and opened his mouth.

The *mutya* went straight to Nardo's mouth. He swallowed it. He expected to feel strong and strange at the same time. But nothing spectacular happened. He was disappointed. He realized that Tandang Cario had been joking all the time. He wanted to cry and lash the banana trees with his bolo, but an earthy voice called his name. He spun around and saw a little man, no taller than a five-year-old boy, standing on a mound of soil. It was a *nuno sa punso*, a termite mound dwarf.

"Do not despair, Nardo," the *nuno sa punso* said. "It will take a while for its power to take effect."

Nardo's insides were churning. He ran for his lamp and held it to see the *nuno sa punso*.

"You are real!" Nardo cried.

"And so are the rest of us," a deep, earthy voice boomed.

Nardo looked to where the voice came from. What he saw was a *kapre*, a hairy giant smoking tobacco, standing beside a big *balete* tree several feet away from the banana plant. Nardo turned to

his left. He saw three *dwende*, or dwarves, huddled together. He turned to his right, where a clump of hibiscus bushes grew. A big black dog stood hidden in the bushes.

Nardo could see all of them in the bright moonlight. A big bird flew above and it cast a shadow upon the ground. He looked up to see a *mananangal* circling above. Nardo stood still, too dumbstruck to speak.

"You are the chosen one," the *kapre* told him. "You will soon get used to us. You will learn our ways. But the time will come when you need to decide. Are you a friend or a foe?"

Nardo felt his blood go cold. A wind blew, and it knocked him to the ground. When he woke up, it was already morning. He was lying on a mat inside his bedroom. His mother came in with a big bowl of *sinigang*.

"We found you at dawn by the fence lying on the ground. You were burning with fever," she said. "You were sleepwalking last night. Your fever is gone, though."

"I didn't know, Inay." Nardo tried to sit up, but his head ached and his throat was dry. It hurt when he spoke.

"Sleepwalking. Hmmm . . ." his mother said to herself. "Must be from your father's side. Sip the hot soup. Lunch will be ready soon." She stood up and left him.

Nardo tried to remember what happened to him the previous night. Though he could vividly recall every detail of his nocturnal adventure, going home was a hazy memory. There were sounds of horses galloping in the distance, but he dismissed this as a dream. What figured prominently were the images of the *mutya* he swallowed, the *nuno sa punso* who assured him that he would be all right, the *kapre*, the *dwende*, and the *mananangal*, who all looked so real in his eyes. The *kapre*'s words echoed in Nardo's head, "*You are the chosen one . . . are you a friend or a foe?*"

In time, Nardo did learn the ways of the supernatural beings he met in the forest. He could see them in the dark without the aid of candle or lamp. He talked to these beings like his friends from town. Some appeared in his dreams foretelling the future. He became a healer and a prophet of sorts. Others, like the *nuno sa punso*, taught him where the medicinal herbs grew in the forest. The *kapre* was the friendliest of all, and he showed Nardo the passageway to a buried treasure. Once the *kapre* offered him the gold. He declined, remembering Tandang Cario's warnings of losing one's soul upon acquisition of the *mutya*.

There was a year when several pregnant women in the village and in the nearby towns had miscarriages, one after the other. Nardo decided to go after the *aswang* that ate all the unborn children. He killed her with a bamboo spear. He realized afterward that it was the village lass whom he killed. Thus began Nardo's ascent to heroic acclaim.

People began to gossip that Nardo had an *agimat*. The fame and the story of Nardong Agimat was born.

THE THREE LOVELY MAIDENS

National Capitol Region

Long ago, when Manila was a young city, its nearby provinces of Rizal and Laguna were ideal places to visit during town fiestas. Three young men from Manila—Pedro, Juan, and Jose—received an invitation from friends in the province of Rizal to attend the town fiesta. Apart from the traditional parade of saints, they were a lot of merrymaking activities that included games, food, and the consumption of alcohol. They hopped from one friend's house to another until their bellies felt like they would burst from so much food and drink.

This partying went on well into the night. It was late, and the three young men received an extended invitation to stay the night at their friend's house. Although they were tipsy from drinking, they did not believe that going home at such a late hour might waylay them because the roads were dark and rough. They all declined the invitation.

"We are not drunk, my friend," Pedro said.

"We can hold our drink!" Juan chimed in.

"We're Manileños, and we're made of stronger stuff!" Jose boasted.

So the three young men left their friend's house and walked to the terminal. Unfortunately, all means of transportation had left the town. They had no choice but to wait until morning for the next bus.

Jose blurted out, "I could walk from here to Manila!"

Pedro and Juan laughed.

"That's crazy! You're drunk. You are thickheaded to deny it!" Pedro said.

"We should have accepted our friend's invitation to stay for the night," Juan shook his head with regret.

"Wimps!" Jose said loudly. He stood up and teetered down the road.

Pedro and Juan followed for fear of their friend's well-being. Their only guides were the lampposts that stood at the side of the road one meter apart from each other. They reached the last lamppost and a fork in the road. A sign to Manila pointed to the right. But because of their inebriated state, they mistakenly took the other path. Soon, they figured they were lost.

They stumbled down the road for hours cursing and blaming each other until they saw a light coming from a house behind a wooded area. They ran toward the house.

"There are people here!" all three called from outside.

Three lovely maidens leaned out of the window.

"Good evening!" the first maiden called back. "From where do you hail?"

"We got lost on our way back to Manila," Pedro replied.

"But that is a foolish thing to do. I mean walking back to Manila at this hour!" the second maiden giggled.

"You three can spend the night here. We have room and food for weary travelers," the last of the maidens said.

Pedro, Juan, and Jose could not believe their great fortune. They were offered food and room for the night. Besides, three lovely maidens were their hosts! No guys could be luckier! They patted each other on the back. When they had settled in for the night, the maidens retreated to their own rooms.

"Is it because I drank so much that the soup was tasteless?" Pedro began.

"I tasted the same. The chicken was bland too!" Jose agreed.

"Complain about the taste! I found a thumb in my *sinigang* soup!" Juan exclaimed.

"It seems they did not use garlic for the fried rice," Jose told his friends.

"The same with the chicken *adobo*. No garlic, pepper, or bay leaf at all!" Pedro said.

"You can criticize the taste of the food, but I found an eyeball on my plate of chicken *adobo*! I hardly ate!" Juan cried in fear.

The three friends realized that they had been taken in either by *aswangs* (vampires) or *manananggals*, winged female demons. If they were in the house of *aswangs*, they were possible prey. If they were in the house of *manananggals*, they could escape, for these creatures eat only the flesh of children and the newborn. They planned their escape.

The guys checked their watches. It was one hour before midnight. They pretended to sleep. At exactly midnight, they heard the hissing and fluttering of wings. A foul smell of blood and feces permeated the air. And then, all was silent.

Pedro, Juan, and Jose crept out of the room. Juan checked the maidens' rooms. It was empty. Pedro went to the *batalan* and saw the maidens' bodies cut off at the waist. Jose quickly took ash from the cold earthen stove and sprinkled it on the bodies. Smoke rose from the cut waists where the flesh bubbled. They departed the house and made a hasty run to the open road.

By that time, it was early dawn. They heard a rushing in the air, and voices called out—

Good young men! What have you done?

Why put ash on our bodies?

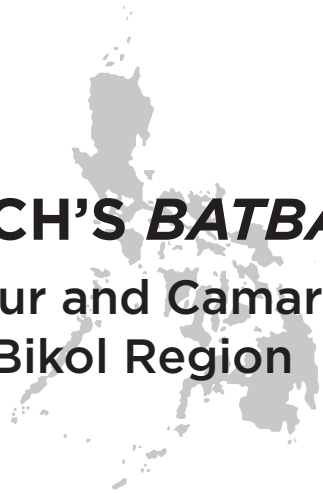
Good young men! Sweet Young men!

Wash the ash from our bodies or else we die by sunrise!

The three friends ran as fast as their feet could take them. The *manananggals*' cries followed them. They did not stop or look back. They were out of breath when they reached the fork in the road. The sun slowly rose from the east, and soon the cries became faint and then disappeared altogether.

They stopped to catch their breath on the side of the road. When a bus came by, they boarded and rode home to Manila. People inside the bus gave them strange looks. Jose, Pedro, and Juan were all spooked by the experience. Their faces were white, and their hair was disheveled. It was an adventure they would always remember. They each went home to their families with stories of the night with the *manananggals*.

What the three friends learned from the experience was to heed the advice of trusted friends and to not accept the hospitality of strangers in the dark of night in odd places.



THE WITCH'S *BATBATCUAO*

Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte, Bikol Region

Story Note: In a thick forest, there was a house believed to be the dwelling of a witch. The witch, an old woman who had lived to be 100 years old, had many pets in the forest. One of these was the Batbatcuao, *a large bird that had the ability change itself into a person. Its eyes were large, but it could not see in the daytime. Its claws were so sharp and strong that no person had ever escaped its grip. Its beak could tear flesh and meat away from the bone. This pet was the witch's favorite, for it was the most mischievous and vicious creature of all.*

One day, a businessman and his young daughter settled in a town where the forest was a few kilometers away. The town knew about the notorious witch who lived in the forest and the many wicked pets she kept. The businessman and her daughter were forewarned of the witch's existence. The townspeople told them about the strange noise that would come from the forest at night, especially during a full moon. They told the new settlers never to imitate these noises, for they would invite the witch's pets into their house. These pets had abducted many villagers from the town and from nearby barrios as well.

The businessman who grew up and lived in the city disregarded the warning. He thought of these as mere stories. They settled and lived in their new house. Soon, they were part of the community.

The businessman's young daughter, Cornelia, was often left at home. After school, she would drop by a friend's house. By twilight, she was home to prepare dinner for herself and her father.

One night, her father had not arrived home from a visit to another province. Cornelia was alone in the house. She turned on the lamp kept the windows open. She sat by the living room window waiting for her father. The moon was full and bright. Stars peppered the indigo sky.

One by one, Cornelia heard the cries of animals: a dog barked in the distance, a cat meowed nearby, a bird whistled above. She found the birdcall most interesting, so she imitated its sound. Immediately, she saw a dozen birds fly toward her from the moonlit sky. The birds quickly landed on the roof. She heard them making sounds as if calling another dozen birds. Goose bumps covered her skin. It was then that she remembered what her friend told her about not imitating animal sounds, especially at night when the moon was bright and full.

Cornelia closed the windows. She locked the doors. A swooping sound and the hiss of wings came from the sky. A moment's silence, then she heard a cry—

Bat! Batcuao! Bat! Batcuao!
I will take the girl from the house now!

Cornelia ran to her room and locked the door. She heard it again—

Bat! Batcuao! Bat! Batcuao!
She's trying to hide from me now
But I can see her somehow

Cornelia lay on the bed and covered herself with a blanket. The cries would not stop—

Bat! Batcuao! Bat! Batcuao!
She's covered herself with a blanket now
But I will take her; I know how

Cornelia heard the cry getting closer and closer—

Bat! Batcuao! Bat! Batcuao!
You'll try to escape; but how?
It's no use. I will take you now!

Cornelia went inside her *aparador* and hid there. She heard the door open and the sound of footsteps approaching her room. Quickly, she reached for her sewing box. She took one white shuttle of thread and wrapped the end on her finger. If she were to be taken, the thread would lead her father to find her.

Huddling inside the *aparador* (closet), shaking in fear, she heard footsteps inside her room. The door of the *aparador* flung open, and she saw the ugliest man she had ever seen. He had talon-like fingernails, big round eyes, and sharp, yellow teeth.

Cornelia screamed as the man raised one hand to cut off her head. Cornelia's head tumbled to the floor. Next, her body fell. Blood splattered all over her room.

The man took Cornelia's head. With one cry—

Bat! Batcuao! Bat! Batcuao!
I have her head now!
We will fly back now!

The black birds that roosted on the roof carried Cornelia's body as the *Batbatcuao* changed into its birdlike form. They flew to the forest to give Cornelia's head and body to the witch, their master.

It was nearly midnight when Cornelia's father came home. He vomited at the sight of the blood in his daughter's room. He was overcome with grief and sobbed uncontrollably for what seemed like hours. Then he ran like a madman to the *barangay* (neighborhood) captain's house for help. He told the captain what he saw and that Cornelia was missing.

The *barangay* captain said, "There is only one man who has been to the witch's house and back. Old man Jose, the *albularyo*, the healer."

Cornelia's father pleaded, "Please bring me to him!"

They went to see old man Jose, who asked to be taken to the businessman's house. Once inside, the *albularyo*, examined the blood that spilled on Cornelia's room. Then old man Jose saw the shuttle of white thread.

"Your daughter left us a clue. I will give you a jar of salt. Bring garlic, bolos, and spears. Use the salt for the witch's pets. If you want to have your daughter back, follow the trail. Bring a few

men with you to the witch's house, but you alone must go inside for your daughter," old man Jose told the businessman.

The businessman prepared salt, garlic, and bolos. At sunrise, the businessman asked for help from the townspeople. Four men accompanied him to the witch's house. They followed Cornelia's thread. It ended right in front of the witch's front yard.

A dog, a cat, and a black rooster stood as guards in front of the witch's house. They looked like ordinary animals at daylight, but they were enchanted. One of the men threw salt at the rooster, and it evaporated like gas. The smoke went inside an open window. The whole house shook and rattled.

They took turns scattering garlic and salt in the yard. The pets ran away in different directions. The four men stood guard the moment the witch's pets fled. The businessman entered the house alone. He saw heads of different sizes hanging from a beam in the house. There was a faint smell of blood in the room, and it assaulted his lungs. His stomach was weak from seeing the severed heads and smelling the blood. He convulsed and vomited. With shaking legs, he walked into a room where an old woman sat in the middle of the floor. On her lap was the head of Cornelia.

"Ah, you have come. You frightened my pets. You killed one of my roosters! How dare you spread sea salt in my backyard—and during daylight at that. Coward!" the witch said angrily.

"Give me back my daughter! She's the only memory of my beloved wife!" the businessman demanded.

"Here is the head of your daughter!" The witch held it up with her gnarled hands. "You can destroy everything in this house but not me! Bwahaha! Hihihihi!"

The businessman threw sea salt at the witch, but she disappeared before the salt hit her. All that was left was Cornelia's head on top of an old black dress that belonged to the witch. The businessman took his daughter's head and wept bitterly. He lifted the witch's black dress and saw the body of his daughter underneath it. He carried Cornelia's head out to the yard. He went back inside the house to retrieve her body.

His four companions created a fire by rubbing together two pieces of dry wood. They set the witch's house on fire while he covered Cornelia's head and body with the black dress. They went back to the town silently and brought Cornelia's remains to old man Jose.

"I cannot undo the witch's black magic. I am sorry. I am a mere *albularyo*. I heal and prevent such things from happening." Old man Jose wept too, for he had seen many deaths at hands of the evil witch.

The businessman wept and wailed. He gnashed his teeth and pulled his hair. He felt his insides tear apart. The *barangay* captain tried to console him, but the father's grief was beyond consolation. After an hour or so, the businessman asked for a priest to bless Cornelia's head and body before bringing her to the morgue.

The *barangay* captain did whatever he could to help the businessman. They had a quick wake and funeral for Cornelia, and after three days, she was buried in the cemetery behind the church.

Soon after, the businessman thanked old man Jose, the *barangay* captain, and the four men who accompanied him to get Cornelia's body. He left the town and returned to the city. The house where he and Cornelia lived was put up for rent, but nobody dared to live in a house touched by black magic.

In time, the house fell into disrepair. Some claim they hear sounds coming from the house—wailing, weeping, and sobbing sounds. On nights when the moon is full, people say there are strange bird calls that emanate from the house, although no winged creature was ever seen roosting there. Passersby claim that they sometimes see the ghostly figure of a young woman sitting by the window, as if waiting for someone to return.

Such is the sad fate of the girl who was taken by the *Batbatcuao*. Since then, parents forbid their children to imitate the animal sounds heard in the dark.

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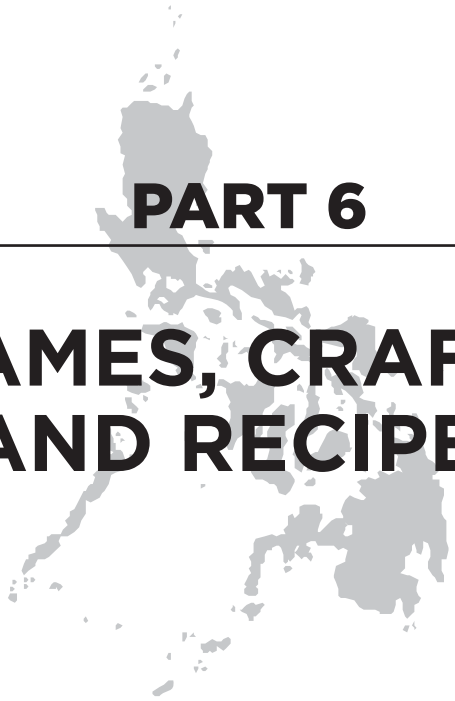

PART 6

GAMES, CRAFTS, AND RECIPES

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FILIPINO GAMES

SUNGKA

Sungka is an indoor game played by two people using a sungka board. The board has seven cups for each player. The six cups hold seven cowrie shells each. The seventh cup is the player's home base. In cases where there are no cowrie shells available, players can use stones or fruit seeds. The objective of the game is for a player to amass the most number of shells or stones in the player's home base. By distributing the shells or stones from the 12 cups in a counterclockwise fashion, a player who is able to gather the most number of shells or stones wins the game.

How to Play

The game begins with each player selecting a cup from his or her row. Using a counterclockwise movement, the player distributes the shells in each cup. On the seventh drop of shell, the player continues to distribute the shells except on his or her opponent's home base. As long as the cup has a shell, the player stays alive. If the player runs out of shells, the following may occur:

1. If the player's last shell ended in his opponent's cup, the player's turn ends.
2. If the player's last shell ended in his own home base, the player can continue distributing the shells by choosing from any of the six cups in his row until his turn ends.
3. If the player's last shell ended in a cup on his row and the opponent's cup contains shells, the player must get all of the shells. He must continue the game.
4. If the player's last shell ended in the last cup in his row, all the shells in the last cup will be placed in the player's home base. Thus, his shells will increase in number.
5. If the player runs out of shells in a cup from his row, he loses a turn or the game ends for him.

Sungka board with shells.

At the end where both players have empty cups, the shells they've gathered in one round of the game will be counted. The player with the most number of shells in his or her home base wins the game.

PABITIN (HANGED GOODIES)

A bamboo frame made of four sticks vertical and four sticks horizontal is filled with goodies—toys, candies, accessories, school supplies, and novelty items. These are tied to the bamboo sticks in groups or individually per item. The bamboo frame is held on a rope that runs over and under a pulley. The end of the rope is tied on a knob. At times, a person is assigned to hold the end of the rope.

This bamboo frame is lowered over a group of participants who will catch or pick an item that is tied to the bamboo frame. The person holding the rope can control the height to which the bamboo frame is raised or lowered.

When a majority of participants have procured an item or goody, the person assigned to hold the rope lets go of the bamboo frame, and the rest of the players are left to scamper for the remaining items or goodies.

Pabitin is often played during town fiestas or parties. There is no limit to the number of players.

PUKPOK PALAYOK (HIT THE POT)

An earthen clay pot or jar is filled with goodies (candies and/or toys) and water or confetti. A rope is tied around the clay pot or jar, and this runs over and under a pulley. It is similar to the piñata in that the player is blindfolded, made to walk toward the pot or jar, and given a wooden pestle or a bat to hit it.

Once the pot or jar is broken, its contents spill out. Then the player who caused it to break wins a prize while the rest of the players pick up the goodies that fall to the ground. Like the Pabitin, this game is a popular one among children at parties and fiestas. Anyone who wants to try his or her luck in hitting the pot or jar must line up and wait for his or her turn. When the pot or jar is hit and breaks into pieces, the game is over.

Hit the pot.

LUKSONG TINIK (A FILIPINO VARIANT OF LEAPFROG)

Luksong Tinik is a group game that can be played by three or five players in a group. An "it" is determined by playing one round of paper-rock-scissors. Whoever loses will be the "it." The "it" group decides to pick two players who will act as base. They will form the *tinik*. or thorn, using their foot (left or right) as first level. Their hands will make (left or right) the second level. The players of the other group will all jump over the *tinik* made by the players of the "it" group. If a hand, a foot, clothing, or any object touched the *tinik* of the "it" group, they lose their turn and become the new "it." The teams can decide the scoring process. Usually, the group or team who has the most number of successful jumps wins the game.

Luksong tinik.

LANGIT AT LUPA (HEAVEN AND EARTH: A GAME OF TAG)

Langit at Lupa is a game of tag played individually by six or more players. The "it" is determined by process of elimination. All the players lay their hands on top of each other, and on the count of three, players throw their hands into the air to land in their other hand, palms up or down. Those whose palms are up will be eliminated until one is left with a palm facing downward. He or she becomes the "it."

The "it" will chase players who are on the ground running (*Lupa*, or Earth). When the player climbs up to higher ground or on a step (*Langit*, or Heaven), he or she is safe. The "it" must be watchful for those who step down from *Langit* and run on the *Lupa* so that the "it" can tag this player. Creating a boundary at the start of the game is necessary. A player who runs outside the designated boundary automatically replaces the "it."

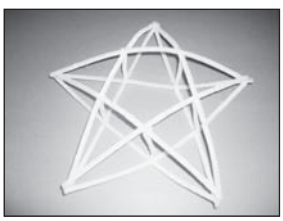
CRAFTS

PAROL, A FILIPINO CHRISTMAS LANTERN

Materials Needed:
10 pieces of 12-inch-long white chenille (fuzzy) sticks
5 pieces of 2-inch-long white chenille (fuzzy) sticks
3 sheets of different color tissue paper
Hot glue
Ribbon
Scissors

Directions:

1. You will create a star frame for the *parol*. Using five 12-inch-long chenille sticks, create the shape of star and glue them together.
2. Using the same star as a guide, create another star exactly the same size with the other five chenille sticks.



Chenille stick *parol* frame.

3. Glue the five points of each star together.
4. On the inside of the star, there is a hexagon. Insert an upright 2-inch-long chenille stick and glue between the top star and the bottom star at one of the points in the hexagon. This will create a space between the two stars.
5. Continue this all the way around the hexagon. It will look like this:
6. On one side of the star, glue a sheet of tissue paper to the frame. Trim the excess with scissors.
7. On the other side of the star, glue a sheet of tissue paper to the frame. Trim the excess with scissors.
8. On each side of the star, cut and glue smaller sheets of tissue paper. Trim the excess with scissors.
9. Decorate with ribbon and attach tassels or ribbon to the bottom two points of the star.
10. You now have a *parol*.

Hanging *parol*.

FILIPINO DISHES

SINANGLAY NI MAMU DHEL (FISH COOKED IN COCONUT)

Bikol Region

Ingredients:

3 tilapia (Nile perch, cherry snapper), medium size
½ pound tomatoes
2 cloves garlic
¼ cup onions
½ teaspoon ginger
1 cup shredded fresh coconut meat
1 pound Gabi leaves (you may substitute chard or spinach leaves)

Directions:

1. Clean and slice open tilapia belly.
2. Salt tilapia and set aside.
3. Slice tomatoes in half and remove seeds. Chop finely.
4. Finely chop ginger, garlic, and onions.
5. Mix chopped tomatoes, onions, garlic, and ginger in bowl. Set aside.
6. Squeeze coconut milk from shredded coconut meat. Place extracted coconut milk in a cup. Spoon 4 tablespoons of coconut milk into mixture of chopped tomatoes, garlic, ginger, and onions.
8. Stuff mixture of chopped tomatoes, garlic, ginger, and onions inside belly of each tilapia.
9. Cover each tilapia with gabi leaves.
10. Get a second extraction of coconut milk from shredded coconut meat. Add 2 cups of water. This will be soup base of stuffed tilapia.
11. Boil tilapia in deep pot with coconut milk soup base for 30 minutes.
12. Pour first extraction of coconut milk into pot when soup base has turned into a saucy mixture.
13. Simmer over low heat.
14. Serve hot.

KINILAW NA TANIGUE (FILIPINO CEVICHE)

Eastern Visayas Region

Ingredients:

2 pounds tanigue (Spanish mackerel)
3 onions (medium size)
1 tablespoon ginger, minced

6 to 10 kalamansi fruit (you may substitute combined juice of 2 limes and 1 orange)
¼ cup vinegar
1½ cups coconut milk
Salt, pepper, and fresh chilies

Directions:

1. Slice meat of tanigue into cubes.
2. Wash meat in ¼ cup vinegar and 3 teaspoons of salt.
3. Knead and press tanigue meat. Strain meat and set aside.
4. Chop onions and mince ginger.
5. Mix chopped onions and ginger in a bowl. Add tanigue meat.
6. Squeeze juice from kalamansi and place in mixture of chopped of onions, garlic, and tanigue meat.
7. Pour coconut milk into mixture.
8. Salt to taste.
9. Add a dash of pepper or small slices of green and red chili.

PANSIT BIHON (NOODLE DISH)

National Capitol Region

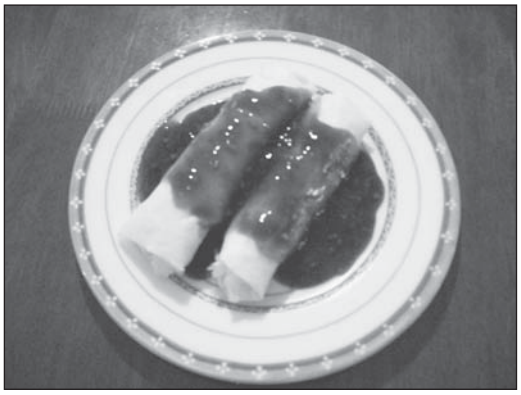
Ingredients:
2 pounds rice noodles
2 pounds chicken liver and gizzard
½ cabbage
1 carrot
1 celery stalk
1 onion
4 cloves garlic
4 cups water
3 teaspoons soy sauce
Salt and pepper
Kalamansi

Directions:

1. Immerse rice noodles in water to soften. Set aside.
2. Boil chicken liver and gizzard. Separate broth when liver and gizzard are cooked.
3. Julienne carrot and chop cabbage and celery to desired size.
4. Cut onions into small pieces and mince garlic.
5. Sauté garlic, onion, chicken liver, and gizzard in a pan.
6. Add water, chicken liver, and gizzard broth. Season with soy sauce.
7. Let simmer then add cabbage and carrot.
8. Salt and pepper to taste.
9. When vegetables are half cooked, remove and set aside in a bowl.
10. Strain rice noodles and place them in remaining soup base of sautéed vegetables.
11. Let rice noodles boil until fully cooked.
12. Remove cooked rice noodles and place on platter.
13. Place sautéed vegetables on top of rice noodles.
14. Squeeze kalamansi juice to taste and garnish with chopped celery leaves.
15. Serve hot.

FRESH LUMPIA (FILIPINO EGG ROLL)

Tagalog Region



Lumpia Ubod (Type of Fresh Filipino Egg Roll).

Lumpia Fried (Type of Fried Filipino Egg Roll).

Ingredients:

Lumpia filling:

2 pounds ubod (heart of a young coconut/ palm)
1 pound chicken
½ cabbage
1 carrot
2 celery stalks
1 large onion
10 cloves garlic

Lumpia sauce:

8 cups water
½ cup crushed peanuts
2 cloves garlic
1 cup soy sauce
1 cup sugar
Salt
2 cups cornstarch

Lumpia wrapper:

3 cups flour
3 cups cornstarch
2 eggs
Salt
Cooking oil

Directions:

To make filling:

1. Cut ubod in long, thin strips.
2. Place in bowl of water for 10 minutes. Strain ubod and let dry.
3. Boil chicken and shred meat when fully cooked.
4. Slice cabbage and carrot into long, thin strips.

5. Chop garlic and onion.
6. Sauté garlic, onion, chicken, cabbage, and carrot.
7. Salt to taste.

To make sauce:

1. Boil 8 cups water.
2. Pour soy sauce into water.
3. Mix in sugar, garlic, and peanuts.
4. Flavor with salt.
5. Add cornstarch.
6. Stir until sauce's consistency thickens.

To make lumpia wrapper:

1. Mix flour, cornstarch, eggs, and salt until thickened into batter.
2. Strain batter to remove lumps.
3. Coat Teflon pan with oil. Warm over low heat.
4. Pour 1/8 cup batter into the pan and cook like a crepe. Turn it over to cook other side.
5. When both sides are cooked, let wrapper cool.
6. Place wrapper on plate. Spoon filling in middle of wrapper. Roll halfway, then fold both sides in. Continue rolling to look like egg roll.
7. Pour sauce on top of lumpia. Garnish with chopped garlic.

SQUASH SOUP

Ingredients:

2 pounds squash
1 carrot
1 onion
3 cloves garlic
2 tablespoons fish sauce
4 cups water
3 eggs
2 teaspoons cornstarch
Pepper
Boiled quail eggs

Directions:

1. Cut squash in half.
2. Peel squash remove the seeds.
3. Grate one-half of squash.
4. Cube carrots and other half of squash.
5. Sauté garlic and onion. Add fish sauce.
6. Add 4 cups of water and allow to boil.
7. Add carrots and squash.
8. When carrots and squash are cooked, add grated squash.
9. Allow the soup to simmer.
10. Beat three eggs and add to soup. Stir.

11. Dilute cornstarch in ½ cup of water and add to soup.
12. Mix continuously to prevent lumps from forming.
13. Once soup's consistency has thickened slightly, turn off heat.
14. Add quail eggs.
15. Serve hot with crackers or bread sticks.

APPENDIX: NOTES ABOUT THE TALES

PART 1: ANIMAL STORIES

The Monkey and the Turtle: The Banana Thieves (Pampanga, Central Luzon)

In the Philippines, Jose Rizal's "The Monkey and the Tortoise" is a popular tale retold countless times. National Children's Book Day is celebrated annually to commemorate Rizal's first and only children's folktale. The story is one of trickery where the patient and persevering Tortoise outwits the street-smart Monkey. In this tale, the theme and formula of Rizal's version is intact, but emphasis on Monkey's selfish and cunning ways are reasons why he ends up in trouble. This version is adapted from the following sources: Damiana L. Eugenio's compilation of animal tales in the book *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001), Ma. Delia Coronel's *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore* (University of Sto. Tomas Press, 1966) (the Kalinga version of the monkey and the turtle tale), Ramos Maximo's "The Monkey and the Tortoise" in *Tales of Long Ago in the Philippines* (Alip & Sons, Inc., 1953), Dean S. Fansler's "The Monkey and the Turtle" (three versions) in *Filipino Popular Tales* (Folklore Association, Inc., 1965), and Amorita C. Hiligaynon Rabuco's "Monkey and the Turtle" (eight versions) in *Mythological Stories and Folktales: Analysis and Translation* (University of San Augustin, 2006).

The Crow and the Gecko (Lepanto, Mountain Province, Cordillera Autonomous Region)

This tale is included in the Damiana L. Eugenio's compilation of animal tales in the book *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the PhilippinesPress, 2001), but a similar version is retold in Luisa Aguilar-Carino's *Cordillera Tales* (New Day, 1990). Part trickster tale and part *pour quoi*, it has a fablelike quality. The tale is adapted from Eugenio's version, and the gecko, a more color animal, was substituted for a lizard. According to Cristina Aben, the Gandungan Museum curator in Sagada, Benguet, the gecko is also an animal revered by the Igorots and the Ifugaos as one that harkens good fortune. There are also versions found in Camilo Osias's "Why the Crow Is Black" in *The Philippine Readers Volume VI* (Ginn, 1959) and Dean S. Fansler's "How the Crow Became Black" (three versions) in *Filipino Popular Tales* (Folklore Association, Inc., 1965).

The Chicken and the Crow (Cagayan Valley, Northern Luzon)

The story of Chicken and Crow is one among the many stories Zarah heard from her first storyteller, her grandmother, Leonida. Zarah discovered while working on this book that her grandmother was a *babaylan*, a healer and storyteller of the *barangay*, on Zarah's mother's side. Zarah grew up listening to her grandmother's stories of mythical and supernatural beings, plants and animals, scary stories, and those with morals. She remembers her grandmother telling her this story to teach the moral of keeping one's word. Even as a child, Zarah found the story's theme of the consequences, remarkable. In her retelling, Zarah added the value of honesty as another moral of the story. Zarah adapted her retelling from her grandmother's version as an homage to her and

also referenced Rosario P. Nem Singh's story of the fable from her collection of tales titled *Mga Piling Alamat sa Atin at sa Ibang Bansa* (Anvil, 2004). Other versions can also be found in Camilo Osias's "Why the Hens Keep Scratching" in *The Philippine Readers Volume V* (Ginn, 1959), I. V. Mallari's "Why the Hens Keep Scratching All the Time" in *Tales from the Mountain Province* (Philippine Education Co., 1958), and Amorita C. Rabuco's "Chicken and the Hawk" in *Hiligaynon Mythological Stories and Folktales: Analysis and Translation* (University of San Augustin, 2006).

The Tale of Cow and Carabao (Bulacan, Southern Tagalog Region)

The story of the exchange between Cow's and Carabao's skins was adapted from a compilation of Nem Singh's tales (2004) and Johnny C. Young's *101 Popular Local Myths & Legends*. An African folktale follows the same format in Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories*. In this retelling, the friendship between Cow and Carabao is embellished. Their friendship is tarnished because of Cow's stubbornness, but the humor in the exchange of skins is still evident. This tale demonstrates how characters with opposite personalities respond in a given situation. Other versions may be found in Maria O. De Guzman's "Kung Bakit Masikip anf Damit ng Kalabaw at Maluwag Naman ang sa Baka" in *Mga alamat Pilipino: Filipino Legends* (National Book Store, 1972) and Dean S. Fansler's *Filipino Popular Tales* (Pennsylvania Folklore Association, Inc., 1965) (two versions).

Monkey and Turtle's Bananas (Pampanga, Central Luzon)

This story was adapted from Veronica C. Abangan's *Little Book of Fables for Children and Adults* (MG Reprographics Philippines, 1998), Gaudencio V. Aquino's *Philippine Legends* (National Book Store, 1972), and Johnny C. Young's *101 Popular Local Myths and Legends* (Pharoah Enterprises, 1996). The story's motif can be found in other parts of the world and was popularized in a 1995 Caldecott Honor picture book in the United States by Janet Stevens called *Tops & Bottoms*. The picture book features a bear and a rabbit, with the rabbit being the trickster.

The Spider and the Fly (Cavite, Southern Tagalog Region)

One of the early collectors of Philippine folklore was the scholar and researcher Mabel Cook Cole. This fable is from her story collection in *Philippine Folk Tales* (Curtis Brown, 1916), also online at http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/books/philippines/mabelcookcole.html. Collected between 1910 and 1916, the tale speaks volumes, despite its brevity.

Zarah traveled to Iloilo in January 2010 for a storytelling workshop. A group of preschool teachers used the story of "The Spider and the Fly" in a workshop presentation. Their tale was full of drama and dialogue. The story in this book more closely follows Cole's version, celebrating her economy of words.

Yet another version is available in Camilo Osias's "The Spider and the Fly" in *The Philippine Readers Volume V* (Ginn, 1959) and online at "The Spider and the Fly" on the Tagalog Lang website at http://tagalog lang.com/Philippine-Literature/Filipino-Folktales/the-spider-and-the-fly.html and "The Spider and the Fly" by Carla Kern Bayliss, Berton L. Maxfield, and W. H. Millington on the Philippine Folk Tales website at http://www.fullbooks.com/Philippine-Folk-Tales2.html.

Father Rat Finds a Midwife (Quezon Province, Southern Tagalog Region)

Although the number of animals that Father Rat meets in his search for a midwife have been decreased, the ending from its original source has been retained. This version is adapted from Eugenio's collection of animal tales in the book *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001) and Eugenio's "Appearances Often Deceive" in *Philippine Folk Literature Series Vol. IV: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001).

This enmity between the rat and cat exist in other folk stories of varying versions. It appears in Aquino's *Philippine Myths and Legends, Why Dogs, Cats and Mice Fight*, with a dog as third party to the quarrel.

Tamaraw and Kohol (Mindro, Southern Tagalog Region)

Animal races are an interesting motif to share and retell. One character is the aggressor, while the other is simple but smart. Again, the formula of opposites is apparent. Most often, it is the quiet and humble animal who

wins. In this version, Kohol, a snail, was helped by friends of his same kind to win the race against Tamaraw, a carabao indigenous to Mindoro islands.

While attending the 2002 Singapore Storytelling Conference, Thai storyteller Dr. Wajuppa Tossa retold the story with a repetitive call for help from snail. In her version, the snail's competitor was a vain deer who was, like the Tamaraw in this Philippine version, defeated in the end. Mabel Cook Cole's version in *Philippine Folk Tales* (Curtis Brown, 1916) features a snail and a carabao. Other versions can be found in I. V. Mallari's "The Shell and the Deer" in *Tales from the Mountain Province* (Philippine Education Co., 1958), Jean Lieffes's "The Buck and the Snail" in *Twelve Stories for Twelve Stamps and Words of Wisdom: A Cultural Anthology of Traditional Literature from the Philippines* (SIL, 2003), and Liana Romulo's "The Deer and the Snail" in *Filipino Children's Favorite Stories* (Periplus Editions, Ltd, 2000).

In this version, Tamaraw, a more ferocious and competitive animal than Carabao, is used. While tamaraws live in protected areas, their numbers are dwindling. May they remain alive in this adaptation.

The Monkey and the Heron—Amomowai and Tatalaonga (Lanao del Sur, Mindanao)

In this adapted tale from Eugenio's compilation of animal tales in the book *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001), Monkey's partner is the frugal Heron. An online source, *Monki, Makil and the Monkeys*, speak of another version where Ammomowai and Tatalaonga are both mentioned and can be found at http://lakelanao.com/main/?p=18. Heron's chant is intriguing, for it hails from a language of the Maranao, one of the Lumad, an ethnic class of Mindanao. Presently, Maranao traders leave their native homes to conduct business in the city. Their colorful *malongs* are the distinct attire they wear every day. Because the Maranao people have adapted to modern times and are heavily involved with trade and commerce, oral recitations of their folk stories are becoming more scarce. Nonetheless, many of their tales have been preserved in books and story anthologies.

Up north in Luzon, a folk story about *Rat and the Sussuetan Bird* resembles the greediness of Ammomowai the Monkey through Rat's uncontrollable appetite appears in Aguilar-Carino's *Cordillera Tales.*

The Butterfly Who Wanted to Be a God (Lanao del Sur, Mindanao)

In Eugenio's collection from *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001), it was a Fly who wished to be god. The fly requests wishes from God. In this retelling, Allah and a *djinn* are used to make the Butterfly's dreams come true. In the end, it is not an issue of a god granting wishes but the danger of asking for too much for one's own good. This same motif can also be found in the stories "The Fisherman and his Wife" collected by the Brothers Grimm; "The Old Woman and the Vinegar Bottle," an English tale; and "The Stonecutter," a tale from Japan. Other versions can be found in Camilo Osias's "Origin of Butterflies" in *The Philippine Readers Volume V* (Ginn, 1959), Amorita C. Rabuco's "Butterfly" in *Hiligaynon Mythological Stories and Folktales: Analysis and Translation* (University of San Augustin, 2006), and Damiana Eugenio's "The Fly Who Wanted to Become God" in *Philippine Folk Literature Series Vol. IV: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001).

The Sparrow and the Shrimp (Lanao del Norte, Mindanao)

The plot structure from the version compiled by Eugenio in *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001) has been preserved because of its romantic slant. "Romeo and Juliet" type stories exist in folktales because they give readers a sense of hope in the midst of loss. Another version can be found in Abdullah T. Madale's "The Sparrow and the Shrimp" in *The Maranaws: Dwellers of the Lake* (Rex Book Store, 1997).

PART 2: TALES OF ENCHANTMENT

The Old Tailor (National Capitol Region)

This story of a fine, young tailor, blessed with courage and bravery, was first discovered in the stories of *Lola Basyang* (Grandma Basyang) originally created by Severino Reyes and adapted by Christine Bellen (Anvil,

2005). The *Lola Basyang* stories were very popular in the 1950s and 1960s. The stories were so popular that they appeared on the radio as a storytelling program. In the following two decades, the collection of tales seemed to hibernate until Bellen's scholarly study of the life of Severino Reyes. Recently, a local Filipino television network has adapted the series to once again bring the wonderful tales of Lola Basyang to Filipino children.

The story of the old tailor from the Basyang series is reminiscent of Roger Jenkins's telling at the 2002 Singapore Storytelling Congress. The elements of the Basyang version were combined with the delightful onomatopoeia from Jenkins's version. The end result is a profusion of Philippine culture and history with the added spice of wordplay.

Makaya and Magboloto: A Visayan Tale of the Celestial Maiden (Samar, Eastern Visayas Region)

The story of the Celestial Maiden exists in many folktales from different ethnic groups in the Philippines. One example is "Tokfefe" from the Igorot people. The story of Makaya and Magboloto came from several sources. Zarah's mother-in-law, who grew up in Eastern Samar of Guian province, provided a version of the tale. Yaya Fe from the northern part of the Philippines, Zarah's former nanny, provided yet another account. In Yaya Fe's story, the young man was determined to win back the woman he loved. The retelling from Zarah's mother-in-law's is a take on truth and integrity. Both themes have been adapted and retold to give a new spin to an old tale.

This story can also be found in Eugenio's collection from *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001). In 2008–2009, the Cultural Center of the Philippines organized an arts conference around the Celestial Maiden to celebrate this strong female figure common to many Asian cultures. A retelling of a Chinese version called "The Cowherd and the Weaving Maiden" can be found in Dianne's book *Kamishibai Story Theater: The Art of Picture Telling* (Teacher Ideas Press, 2006). An online source is also available in "Magboloto" in Philippine Folk Tales by Carla Kern Bayliss, Berton L. Maxfield, and W. H. Millington at http://www.fullbooks.com/Philippine-Folk-Tales1.html.

Mariang Isda: A Visayan Cinderella (Leyte, Eastern Visayas Region)

This tale was adapted from three versions compiled and retold by Sister Maria Delia Coronel in her book *Stories and Legends from Philippine Folklore* (University of Sto. Tomas Press, 1968) and collected from Winifreda Manadong in San Roque, Guiuan Eastern Samar, and Luz Cruzat in St. Joseph Village, Cabuyao Laguna (January 20, 2011). It is the typical "Cinderella" story, but the ending chosen for this tale is a not a joyous one. Although the readers will not find a "happily ever after," Maria does escape a cruel fate from her evil stepmother. The ending is also open ended. Where does Maria go? Who is the fish that gave her the pearl? The tale is sure to spark many discussions.

Mariang Makiling and the Golden Ginger Root (Calamba, Laguna, Southern Tagalog Region)

Mariang Makiling is a popular tale since the mountain of her namesake is the "stuff of legends." The source for this retelling is Gaudencio V. Aquino's *Philippine Myths and Legends* (National Book Store, 1992). This adaptation includes a young man, naive and desperate, who becomes the recipient of Maria Makiling's benevolence. Modern stories of Mariang Makiling abound in the provinces of Laguna and Batangas and have transformed Maria Makiling into an urban legend. Other versions can be found in Benjamin B. Domingo and Eileen Anderson's "Legend of Mariang Makiling" *in Legends of Two Peoples* (FSI, 1983), Osias's "Maria of Makiling" in *The Philippine Readers Volume VII* (Ginn, 1920), and Genoveva Edroza and Rufino Alejandro's "Ang Alamat ni Mariang Makiling" in *Diwang Ginto Part III* (Philippine Book Co., 1949).

Minggan and Mariang Sinukuan (Nueva Ecija, Central Luzon Region)

The source for this story came from Fely Rose V. Manaois. She works in a nongovernmental organization that advocates reading and literacy. Her story is a variant collected from several informants in Pantabangan,

Nueva Ecija. The folktale is part of her master's thesis for a master of arts in language and literature degree. She has generously shared the story of Mariang Sinukuan for retelling. Other versions can be found in John F. R. Santos and Karmina D. Torres's "Alamat ni Mariang Sinukuan" in *Alamat* (Philippine Graphic Arts, 2004) and Gaudencio Aquino's "The Legend of Mt. Arayat" in *Philippine Myths and Legends* (National Book Store, 1992).

Manggao and Maria Cacao (Cebu, Central Visayas Region)

The story of Maria Cacao was adapted from several variants in Coronel's compilation *Stories and Legends from Philippine Folklore* (University of Sto. Tomas Press, 1968). Verifying the folktale further, a story found on an online site tells of Maria Cacao being the owner of a galleon that exports cacao seeds and *tablea*, chocolate tablets used to flavor some Filipino desserts. The version that appears in this book depicts Maria Cacao as a benefactress and *diwata* who gifts a boy her precious cacao *tablea*. Thus, cacao and *tablea* making are introduced to Cebuanos from the district of Argao. Other versions can be found in "Si Maria Kakaw" in *Mga Salaysay Sa Rehiyon VII: Mga Alamat At Kwentong-Bayan* (Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino, 2003) and in a collection of essays by Resil Mojares in the book *Cebu: More Than an Island* (Ayala Foundation, 1997).

The Mayor Who Had Two Horns (Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Region)

This tale was adapted from "The Presidente Who Had Horns" in Mabel Cook Cole's Book, *Philippine Folk Tales* (Curtis Brown, 1916) and Maria O. De Guzman's *"Ang Haring May Sungay at si Juan" in Mga Alamat Pilipino: Filipino Legends* (National Book Store, 1972). An oral version was also collected from Dolor Placides, a native of Cagayan Nuevo, Tuguegarao Cagayan (February 5, 2011). It is a retelling of a president who wished to have two horns in order to look powerful. The character of the president has been changed to a mayor to contextualize a closer association of local leadership to a common Filipino town or city. An online source for her collections of folktales is found at http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/books/philippines/mabelcookcole.html.

Buton the Magic Frog (South Cotabato, Mindanao)

Originally titled "Salandungoy" in Eugenio's book *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (University of the Philippines Press, 2001), this tale originated from Blaan folk literature. The Blaan is one of the Lumad of Minadanao. This adaptation retains the essence of the "good versus bad" characters played by Salandungoy and Gamaw, respectively. The story has been embellished with an additional chant sung by Buton the magic frog to add humor and a bit of drama. Other versions are found in Cesar D. Lutero's "Salandungoy" in *Blaan Folk Literature* (M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines, 1986) and UP Folklorists, and U. P. Diliman's *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (Philippine National Science Society, 1989).

Ang Ibong Adarna (The Adarna Bird) (National Capitol Region)

The Ibong Adarna is originally a metrical romance, known as *corrido*. The corrido version can actually be found in Project Gutenberg's digital library at http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16157. Its classic appeal and enchanting characteristics have inspired many imaginative writers and storytellers to adapt and retell the story. Many versions exist. From children's books to musicals, the Adarna soars as a symbol of the great influence the Spanish had on the Philippine psyche.

This adaptation comes from Victoria Anonuevo's version, *Ang Alamat ng Ibong Adarna* (Adarna House, 2001). This fresh take involves a farmer named Ignacio and his daughter, Cecilia, who endures a terrible malady—the loss of speech. On Don Juan's capture of the Adarna Bird, Cecilia regains her voice. This retelling focuses on the character traits of the three princes and their individual quests to capture the Adarna Bird. This retelling of Ibong Adarna is also influenced by the many epic stories of valor from in *1001 Arabian Nights*.

Other versions may be found in Eulogio B. Rodriguez's *The Adarna Bird: A Filipino Tale of Pre-Spanish Origin Incorporated in the Development of Philippine Literature: The Rapid Growth of Vernacular Belles-Letres from its Earliest Inception to the Present Day* (General Printing Press, 1933) and Teodoro Kalaw's *Five Preceptives from Our Ancient Morality: An Interpretation* (Crown Printing, 1951).

The Fisherman and the Mermaid (Surigao, Mindanao)

The tale was adapted from Eugenio's collection of stories in *Philippine Folk Literature: The Folktales* (UP Press, 2001), again a reliable compilation of Filipino tales. A Cebuano version, *Kataw* (Mermaid) appears in *Cebuano Tales* (San Carlos Publication, 1977) and *Legend of the Mermaid* by Coronel's *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore* (University of Sto. Tomas Press, 1968).

During a school visit trip to Surigao in September 2010, Zarah's host gave her a tour of the countryside and the shoreline. One island in Surigao, Dinagat, is a popular tourist destination. The tour guide mentioned mermaids and golden treasures from the sea and the caves of the island. Another oral version was collected from a teacher at St. Paul's College in Surigao, Mindanao (September 2, 2010). These tales fueled Zarah's imagination and helped her embellish the tale of this gift-giving *kataw*.

The Legend of the Durian Fruit (Visayas and Mindanao)

The sources for this legend came from Manuel Viloria who has an online version at http://www.veranda.com.ph/viloria/alamat and from Neni Sta. Romana-Cruz, whose book *Why The Piña Has a Hundred Eyes and Other Classic Philippine Folk Tales* (Tahanan Books for Young Readers, 1993) served as inspiration for this adaptation. While Sta. Romana-Cruz, stayed true to her original source for her retelling, this version was tweaked a bit by giving Hangin-Bai and Pawikan, fairy godmother–like roles. The story's end remains the same as the original sources. Other versions are available from Rosario P. Nem Singh's "Alamat ng Duryan" in *Mga Piling Alamat sa Atin at sa Ibang Bansa* (Anvil, 2004) and an online source, "Alamat ng Durian," at Pinoy Edition http://www.pinoyedition.com/maikling-kwento/mga-alamat/alamat-ng-durian.

PART 3: *POUR QUOI* TALES (HOW AND WHY TALES)

The Legend of the Banana (Mindoro, Southern Tagalog Region)

This tale was adapted from Gaudencio V. Aquino's *Philippine Myths & Legends* (National Book Store, 1992) and Johnny C. Young's *101 Popular Local Myths & Legends* (Pharoah Enterprises, 1996). Other versions may be found in Pedro R. Villanueva's "Punong Saging" in *Alamat ng mga Kayumanggi* (Philippine Book Co., 1949), John F. R. Santos and Karmina D. Torres's "Alamat ng Saging" in *Alamat* (Philippine Graphic Arts, 2004), and Amorita C. Rabuco's "Bananas" (four versions) in *Hiligaynon Mythological Stories and Folktales: Analysis and Translation* (University of San Augustin, 2006).

Bananas grow everywhere in the tropical climate of the Philippines. As such, the fruit is as legendary and as central to Filipino daily life as rice. Dianne grew up eating a popular Filpino food made from bananas—banana ketchup! It is made out of mashed bananas, vinegar, sugar, and spices and tastes sweeter than tomato ketchup. Banana ketchup is as common to the Filipino kitchen as tomato ketchup is to the American kitchen.

The Legend of the Cashew Nut (Palawan, Southern Tagalog Region)

There are versions of this legend found in books like Aquino's *Philippine Myths and Legends* (National Book Store, 1992), Zynna Gongzaga's "Kung Bakit Nasa Loob ang Buto ng Kasoy" in *Mga Alamat, Pabula, Epiko at Kwentong-Bayan* (Booklore, 2005), and John F. R. Santos and Karmina D. Torres's "Alamat ng Kasuy" in *Alamat* (Philippine Graphic Arts, 2004) and in Web sources such as this one from Wow Paradise Philippines: http://www.wowparadisephilippines.com/legend-cashew-nut.html.

Both print and online sources became points of references for this adaptation. When Zarah visited Puerto Princesa, Palawan, in April 2010, a librarian in a workshop that Zarah conducted told a brief tale of the cashew nut. A native of Roxas, Palawan, the librarian recalled the folktale as one told by her grandmother to her mother and then passed on to her.

The Legend of the Mango Fruit (Zambales, Central Luzon)

The adaptation for this story was inspired by a version found online at http://www.wowparadisephilippines.com/legend-mangoes.html in which the lead character is a kindhearted boy who dies at a young age. On the other hand, Sta. Romana-Cruz's book *Why the Piña Has a Hundred Eyes and Other Classic Philippine Folk*

Tales (Tahanan Books for Young Readers, 1993) contains a version that is a tragic love story. Other versions include Zynna Gongzaga's "Ang Alamat ng Mangga" in *Mga Alamat, Pabula, Epiko at Kwentong-Bayan* (Booklore, 2005) and Amorita C. Rabuco's "Mango Tree" in *Hiligaynon Mythological Stories and Folktales: Analysis and Translation* (University of San Augustin, 2006).

The Legend of Marinduque (Mimaropa Region, Luzon)

This story was adapted several sources, most notably Gaudencio V. Aquino's version in *Philippine Legends* (National Book Store, Inc., 1972) and Johnny C. Young's *101 Popular Local Myths & Legends* (Pharoah Enterprises, 1996). However, it is an oral source from Jim Claire, a resident of Marinduque, that serves as the inspiration for the romantic version of this tale. Dianne's mother, Josephine Sena Chretien, hails from Marinduque, and Dianne has visited the beautiful island several times. This version of the tale is a tribute to Dianne's mother, Josie; Jim and Erlinda Claire; the Sena family; and the hospitable people of Marinduque, who are full of "heart."

The Legend of the *Lanzones* (Laguna, Southern Tagalog Region)

Zarah first heard this legend in the first grade at a Marian Catholic school. Her teacher read the story aloud in class from an English textbook. Many years later, Zarah was delighted to hear a fourth-grade schoolteacher from Majayjay, Laguna, retell the legend in a storytelling workshop Zarah conducted in June 2010. This adaptation is based primarily on these two sources. It is interesting to note that the transformations attributed to religious icons are evident in many legends across the country. Print versions of the story include Camilo Osias's "Why Lanzones Have Fingermarks on Them" in *The Philippine Readers Volume V* (Ginn, 1959), Pedro R. Villanueva's "Alamat ng Lansones" in *Alamat ng mga Kayumangi* (Philippine Book Co., 1949), and Neni Santa Romana-Cruz's "Mang Selo and the Dream Angel: How the Lanzones Became Edible" in *Why the Pinya Has a Hundred Eyes and Other Classic Philippine Folk Tales about Fruit* (Tahanan Books for Young Readers, 1993).

The First Rainfall (Iriga, Camarines Sur, Bicol Region)

Dakula, the name of the giant in the story comes from the Bikol term, *daku*, meaning "huge." This story was one of the many stories told to Zarah by her grandmother Leonida. It brings to mind the story of the Pied Piper of Hamlin. Zarah also collected an oral version from Rita Manansala, a native of La Opinion, Nabua Camarines Sur (January 10, 2011), and a print version can be found in Rosario P. Nem Singh's "Alamat ng Ulan" in *Mga Piling Alamat sa Atin at sa Ibang Bansa* (Anvil, 2004).

The First Bullfrog (Cebu, Central Visayas)

This story was adapted from Coronel's collection in *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore* (University of Santo Tomas, 1968), except that the wife in this version is depicted as a devoted and dutiful companion even though her husband is lazy and selfish. Another print version can be found in Aurora T. Sta. Maria's "Ang Mayabang na Palaka" in *Mga Kwentong Pinoy* (Smartbooks, 2005) and Aguila-Carino's "Origin of the Frog" in *Cordillera Tales* (New Day, 1990).

The Gift of Kabunyian (Benguet, Cordillera Autonomous Region)

This tale was adapted from a version collected by Zarah, from Manang Tess, a lady she met in a local store in Sagada. Kabunyian is the great spirit revered by the Ifugao and represents creation myths of the region. Because Manang Tess was reticent to share the full tale with a tourist, Zarah searched further for other versions of the story. Fortunately, Maria Luisa B. Aguilar-Cariño's *Cordillera Tales* (New Day, 1990) was discovered in a library in Manila as well as Andrea Amor Tablan's "Alamat ng Bigas" in *Mga Alamat at mga Kwento = Legends and Stories* (Abiva, 1963) and Sofronia Calderon's "Ang Pagkatuklas sa Palay: Ang mga Unang Butyl ng Bigas o ang Unang Sinaing o Kanin" in *Mga Alamat ng Pilipinas: Philippine Mythology, Traditions and Legends* (M. Colcol & Co., 19–?).

How Crab Got Its Eyes (Laguna, Southern Tagalog Region)

Like the story of Dakula, this tale about the crab belongs to the repertoire of Zarah's grandmother Leonida Belmonte. She told this story to demonstrate the importance of listening to one's elders. In Grandmother

Leonida's version, she depicts Bathala as one who punishes Crab for being impertinent. Zarah added zest to the tale by including a rhythmic introductory chant and changing the story's ending to reflect a gentler outlook.

A print version of the story appears in Aguilar-Carino's *Cordillera Tales* (New Day, 1990) and "Why the Crab Has No Head" and in Santhini Govondan's *Animal Folk Stories around the World Vol. 3* (Unicorn Books 19–) bearing the same title.

Guintudan's Greed: The First Stars, Sun, and Moon (Kalinga Apayao, Cordillera Autonomous Region)

The story is adapted from the collection of Coronel's *Stories and Legends from Philippine Folklore* (University of Santo Tomas, 1968), Maria O. De Guzman's "Ang Buwan at ang mga Bituin" in *Mga Alamat Pilipino: Filipino Legends* (National Book Store, 1972), and Amorita C. Rabuco's "Origin of the Sun, Moon, and Stars" (four versions) in *Hiligaynon Mythological Stories and Folktales: Analysis and Translation* (University of San Augustin, 2006). Town feasts in the provinces abound and are occasions for drinking and merrymaking. Like Guintudan, many people visit the homes of their family, friends and neighbors, and relatives and stay for the entire day to celebrate.

In 2006, Dianne visited her mother's island of Marinduque in the province and participated in the fiesta of Our Lady of Biglang Awa (Our Lady of Prompt Succor). From house to house, they visited family and friends and were expected to partake in each household's feast. By the end of the day, Dianne and her mother felt like Guintudan, ready to explode!

How the Banaue Rice Terraces Came to Be (Banaue, Cordillera Autonomous Region)

This tale is adapted from an online source from Sinnead Zenun at http://sinneadzenun.multiply.com/journal/item and Ruth M. Gutierrez's *The Legend of the Banaue Rice Terraces* (LG&M Corporation, 2003). Like Kabunyian's gift of rice grains to Lao-ang, the rice god, Bul-ol, was referred to in the story as a giver. It was mentioned that Bul-ol sat in a squatting position with arms folded on the knees or chest. This is a position of patience and waiting. Many Igorot and Ifugao peoples sit this way as a sign of waiting. To this day, the tribes carve wooden images of the rice god, Bul-ol, for guardianship and good harvest.

Another version that begins with Bugan, the offspring of two powerful gods, as the giver of rice and architect of the rice terraces is in a collection of essays by Florentino Hornedo, *Flavor of The God: Essays on Filipino Religious Thought and Behavior* (University of Sto. Tomas Press, 2001).

Why Bats Fly at Night (National Capitol Region)

This retelling was adapted from Rosario P. Nem Singh's story "Bakit sa Gabi Lumilipad ang Paniki" in her 2004 collection in her book titled *Mga Piling Alamat sa Atin at sa Ibang Bansa*, in which Bat escapes two predators—the eagle and the lion. This version uses a hawk and an *alamid*, a mountain cat, animals indigenous to the Philippines. Other print sources include Dean S. Fansler's "Why Bats Fly at Night" in *Filipino Popular Tales* (Folklore Association, Inc., 1965) and Gaudencio Aquino's "Why Bats Fly at Night" in *Philippine Folk Stories Volume 2* (NBS, 2007).

The Legend of the Chocolate Hills (Bohol Island, Central Visayas Region)

Chocolate Hills on the island of Bohol is a spectacular place. In May 2010, Dianne and Zarah traveled there to experience the breathtaking beauty of the unique land formations. While in Bohol, they also viewed the Tarsier, the world's smallest primate; visited a butterfly sanctuary; and explored the beaches and outlying islands. Visiting this island paradise gave them a great appreciation for the landscape, the people, and their stories.

This legend of Chocolate Hills was adapted from two online sources: "Alamat ng Chocolate Hills" in Pinoy Edition at http://www.pinoyedition.com/maikling-kwento/mga-alamat/alamat-ng-chocolate-hills and "Bohol—Chocolate Hills" from Philippine Insider at http://www.philippinesinsider.com/visayas/bohol/the-chocolate-hills-of-bohol-philippines, depicting a love story between a giant and a mortal. A print version available in "Chocolate Hills" in *Mga Salaysay sa Rehiyon VII: Mga Alamat at Kwentong-Bayan* (Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino, 2003). The version in this book explores the opposing themes of friendship and prejudice

rather than a common tragic love story. It is theorized that the Chocolate Hills of Bohol are limestones that rose from the bottom of the sea. It appears that the geographic anomaly of these mounds of limestones are stunted growths of what could have been a mountain range in the Visayan region.

The Legend of Mount Mayon (Legazpi, Albay, Bicol Region)

Mount Mayon is a famous tourist spot. It is a proud volcano that boasts of many historical eruptions. Many folktale and legends surround the active volcano. This adaptation was inspired by Zarah's aunt Rita Belmonte-Manansala, a native of Camarines Sur, Bicol Region, as well as from Benjamin B. Domingo and Eileen Anderson's "Legend of Mayon Volcano" in *Legends of Two Peoples* (FSI, 1983), Sofronio G. Calderon's "Ang Alamat ng Mayon" in *Mga Alamat ng Pilipinas=Philippine Mythology, Traditions and Legends* (M. Colcol & Co., 19–?), and John F. R. Santos and Karmina D. Torres's "Alamat ng Bulkang Mayon" in *Alamat* (Philippine Graphic Arts, 2004).

The Legend of Cainta (Cainta, Rizal, Southern Tagalog Region)

This tale is inspired by a version in Aquino's 1992 collection of tales in *Philippine Myths and Legends* and Marlene Aguilar-Pollard's *Myths and Legends of the Philippines* (Jacoby, 2000). The *parol* was incorporated into the story as Ka Inta's gift to her fellow towsnfolk and neighbors. Ka Inta is a Santa Claus–like figure who gives gifts to people young and old during the holidays. Cainta is a city in the Southern Tagalog Region of the Philippines. Information regarding the legend of Ka Inta can be read online at sites like Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cainta,_Rizal and Wow Rizal at http://www.wowrizal.com/towns-and-cities/cainta-rizal-facts-location-population-legend-history-barangays.

Parols are star-shaped Christmas lanterns. They are fashioned out of bamboo or wire frames covered with Japanese paper. For Filipino Christians, *parols* commemorate the Star of Bethlehem. Many communities celebrate the yuletide by making this traditional folk craft. In December 2005, Dianne and her family lived in Houston, Texas, after Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans and made them refugees. Taken in by a Filipino family, they celebrated Christmas in Houston, and Dianne was taken to a *parol* festival. *Parols* were handcrafted by children and adults alike. Since then, Dianne treasures the *parol*. Her favorite *parol* is made of *capiz* shells and was given to her by Meinard Cruz, a dear friend in Manila, Philippines.

The Legend of Lake Lanao (Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, Mindanao)

The versions of this religious story about St. Francis Xavier's sandals can be found in Eugenio's collection *Philippine Folk Literature, the Legends* (2005) and Coronel's compilation *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore* (1968). The tale was adapted from the many stories told by Jesuit priests during the Feast of St. Francis Xavier. The Jesuits have had many successful missions in Mindanao, evangelizing the Catholic faith.

The Legend of Santa Martha (Pateros, National Capitol Region)

When Zarah was a little girl, she attended a parish school in Pateros. Since Santa Martha was its patron saint, no classes were held on Santa Martha's feast day. Santa Martha's legend is one Zarah has known since childhood. Nevertheless, Zarah located her former grade-school teacher Mrs. Flerida Natividad-Guevara to hear the tale again and to adapt the tale, which incorporates *balut*, the crocodile, and Santa Martha. Another version is recorded in Eugenio's collection *Philippine Folk Literature Series Vol. III: The Legends* (2005) as well as in an online source at http://www.tagalog-dictionary.com/pateros.

The Legend of the Santo Niño de Cebu (Cebu, Central Visayas)

This legend is adapted from *Cebuano Folktales 2* (1977), a version of the Black Santo Niño. Since the Sinulog is a popular feast and dance associated with the Black Santo Niño, much online material exists, all of which follows the same plot structure. In this retelling, Baladhay dreams of the sea and its dancing waves. The word "Sinulog" originates from *sulog*, meaning "waves dancing." Other print versions include "Ang alamat ng Sinulog" in *Mga Salaysay sa Rehiyon VII: Mga Alamat at Kwentong-Bayan* (Komisyon ng Wikang Filipino, 2003) and Eugenio's "The Origin of the Black Sto. Niño of Cebu" in *Philippine Folk Literature Series Vol. III: The Legends* (University of the Philippines Press, 2005).

Melu and Tau Tana: Creation Story from the B'laans (South Cotabato and Davao del Sur, Mindanao)

Limokon's Children: Creation Story from the Mandayas (Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental Mindanao)

The Igorot Story of Creation (Cordillera Autonomous Region)

What is a collection of *por quoi* tales without stories of creation? This version is adapted from Cook Cole's collection of three different creation stories. Each version is considered sacred by the ethnic group to whom it belongs. Melu, Limokon, and Lumawig are different names, but they have one meaning: a god who grants, gives, and creates.

Several online versions were consulted: "The Story of Creation" in Sacred Texts at http://www.sacred-texts.com/asia/pft/pft41.htm, "The Story of Creation Bilaan Mindanao" from Creation Myths of the Philippines at http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/creation-phil.html#story, "Limokon's Children: Creation Story from the Mandayas (Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental Mindanao)" from AsiaRecipe.Com at http://asiarecipe.com/phitales1.html, "The Children of the Limokon" by Mabel Cooke Cole from Our Own Voice at http://www.oovrag.com/tales/tales2004a-4.shtml, and "The Children of the Limokon" from Sacred Text at http://www.sacred-texts.com/asia/pft/pft43.htm.

PART 4: TRICKSTER TALES

Juan Tamad and the Rice Pot (Batangas, Southern Tagalog Region)

Zarah first heard stories of Juan Tamad from her cousin Analiza Belmonte, who spent summer vacations in Manila. From the province of Batangas, she would bring Zarah gifts of coffee, rambutan (a sweet tropical fruit with a hairy red skin), *lanzones* (a sweet fruit with a smooth ivory skin), and stories of Juan Tamad that Analiza learned from her maternal grandmother Maria. The tales of Juan Tamad were so different from Grandmother Leonida's didactic tales. It wasn't until Zarah was a college student studying Philippine literature that she fully appreciated the humor and lessons of Juan Tamad. A print version is available in Benjamin B. Domingo and Eileen Anderson's "Legend of Juan Tamad, the Lazy One" in *Legends of Two Peoples* (FSI, 1983).

When Zarah attended the 2002 Singapore Storytelling Conference, she was amazed and surprised to hear a Japanese teller perform a version of "Juan Tamad and the Rice Pot." The title of the Japanese teller's story was "The Rice Thief," and it carried the same plot and sequence of Zarah's cousin's retellings of Juan Tamad.

Inug-ay and the *Dayap* Fruit (Mountain Province, Cordillera Autonomous Region)

In May 2010, Dianne and Zarah traveled the windy and dangerous roads of the mountain provinces to Sagada in northern Luzon, a 12-hour journey from Manila. In Sagada, they traversed the rocky terrain of the Fidelisan rice terraces to Bomodoc Falls, descended deep into the bowels of Sumag-Ing Caves, and viewed the hanging coffins of Sagada. It is a journey they will never forget.

This story was collected in a small café in Sagada through a brief encounter with the keeper-owner. Like Manang Tess, she was too shy to expound on the tale and wished to remain anonymous.

Inug-Ay was the name of a 12-year-old boy who waited on Dianne, Zarah, and their travel companions. One of the Sumag-Ing Cave guides was also named Inug-ay. It is a common Igorot name and made its way into this story. This story was also taken from the version by Morice Vanoverbergh in the collection of *Isneg Tales* published by CICM Bauko, Mountain Province, 1955. It is a reprint from *Folktale Studies*, Vol. 14. Another version of this tale is retold by Aguilar-Cariño in *Cordillera Tales*.

Pilandok Goes to Market (Maranao, Mindanao, Southern Tagalog Region)

Juan Tamad in Luzon, Juan Posong in Visayas, and Pilandok in Mindanao. The simpleton travels all over the Philippine islands. His name may be different, but his antics are always the same. In this version adapted from

Eugenio's collection of folktales, Pilandok is partnered with a wife who is his exact opposite. Other print versions include Cagayan's "Filanduk" from *Museum and Archives Publication no. 9* (Xavier University, 1972), Wystan A. Dimalanta's *Mga Pakikipagsapalaran ni Pilandok: Halaw sa Kwentong-Bayan ng Maranaw* (NBS, 1986), and Abdullah Madale's *The Maranaws: Dwellers of the Lake* (Rex Book Store, 1997).

The Deer, the Witch and Alimaung (Davao del Sur, Mindanao)

This story is adapted from Eugenio's collection of animal tales. This retelling makes use of the themes of consequences and wit. There are no humans in the original source, but a grandmother/witch was added to serve as mediator and savior between Alimaung and the deer. Other sources include Esperidion A. Manuel's "The Alimaung and the Deer" in *Upland Bagobo Narratives* (University of the Philippines, 1962) and "Alimaung at ang usa" in *Saliksik ng mga Akdang Maguindanaon, Teduray, Bagobo at Manobo: Panrehiyong Sentro ng Wikang Filipino*. (Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, 2001).

The Adventures of Juan Posong (Cebu, Central Visayas)

Mainly Cebuano in origin, elements from a Mindanoan version have been adapted to suit the story of Juan Posong. The *datu*'s daughter exists in the Cebuano version, but their night together comes from a similar Juan Posong adventure in a Mindanao trickster tale. Merging the two tales resulted in an interesting chemistry and furthers the adventure of Juan and the *datu*'s daughter. Sources include Coronel's "How Juan Pusong Fooled the King: A Mangyan Tale" in *Stories and Legends from Filipino Folklore* (University of Sto. Tomas Press, 1966), Jose Maria Pavon's "The Story of Cuan Pusong as Told by the Indios of the Town of Arevalo and Octong" in *The Robertson Translations of the Pavon Manuscripts of 1838–1839: D Stories of the Indios of the Olden Time and of Today. Transcript No.5-D* (Philippine Studies Program Department of Anthropology, 1957), Mardonio M. Lao's "Juan Pusong" in *Oral Sources on Bukidnon Society and Culture Volume 1 Part 1* (Toyota Foundation, 1998), Teresita V. Pil's "Adventures of Juan Pusong" in *Philippine Folk Fiction and Tales* (New Day, 1977), and Rabuco's "Juan Pusong" (12 stories) in *Hiligaynon Mythological Stories and Folktales: Analysis and Translation* (University of San Augustin, 2006).

PART 5: SCARY STORIES

The Passenger (Quezon City, National Capitol Region)

A white lady story from the Balete Drive is a common urban legend in New Manila, Quezon City. The white lady is a ghost believed to haunt Balete Drive. Online versions can be found in "Myths Surrounding Balete Drive" from Philippines Insider at http://www.philippinesinsider.com/myths-folklore-superstition/myths-surrounding-balete-drive, "White Lady" from Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Lady_%28ghost%29, and "The Ghosts of Balete Drive" from The Halo Halo Bistro at http://halohalobistro.blogspot.com/2009/08/ghosts-of-balete-drive.html.

Essays that explore the existence of the White Lady of Balete Drive appears in Ambeth Ocampo's collection of historical essays and writings *Bonifacio's Bolo* (Anvil, 1995) and Rolando Tolentino's *Sipat at kultura: Tungo sa mapagpalayang pagbabasa, pag-aaral at pagtuturo ng panitikan* (ADMU Press, 2007).

Dianne grew up with her mother telling her stories of the "White Lady," a *mumu*, or ghost, who haunted the roads at night luring unsuspecting motorists to stop and pick her up. This motif of "The Hitchhiker" is a common one in ghost stories around the world.

Nardong Agimat (Cavite, Southern Tagalog Region)

The characters of Philippine lower mythology have been combined into one story about a young man who ingests the essence of a banana heart. "Nardong Agimat" is a tale from Cavite, serialized in local comics in the 1980s and turned into movies during that same decade. Zarah grew up watching television versions of the movie on lazy Saturday afternoons. An oral version was collected from Rosario Belmonte of Silang Cavite (January 12, 2011).

Explanations and essays on the *anting-anting* or *agimat* as owned by Nardong Putik appears in Jeffrey Alfaro Lubang's *Anting-anting sa Kabite* (Cavite Historical Society, 2006) and in Rolando Tolentino's *Geopolitics of the Visible: Essays on Philippine Film Culture*, essay on *Nardong Putik in the Genealogy of Tagalog Folk Heroes by Francisco A. Gealogo.*

The Three Lovely Maidens (National Capitol Region)

The original source came from the collected tales by Manuel Arguilla as compiled by Eugenio in *Philippine Folk Literature: The Legends* (2005). Stories of *mananangals*, or viscera suckers, are common in metropolitan Manila. This version was told to Zarah by her grandmother Leonida on nights when there were power outages or during a full moon to prevent Zarah and her cousins from staying up late. Another source includes Teresita V. Pil's "The Star Maiden" in *Philippine Folk Fiction and Tales* (New Day, 1977).

The Witch's *Batbatcuao* (Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte, Bikol Region)

Zarah's grandmother Leonida Belmonte often instructed Zarah and her cousins never to imitate the sounds of cats meowing at night because of the *Batbatcuao*. As a child, Zarah believed that the stories of the *Batbatcuao* were her grandmother's way of hushing her and her cousins when they were unruly. Unearthing the story of the *Batbatcuao* from Eugenio's collection of legends afforded Zarah the opportunity to reconnect with her grandmother's version and to retell the story, adding her personal touch.

The witch and the *Batbatcuao* in the story resembles the villain in "Pedro and the Witch" from the collection of Dean S. Fansler, *Filipino Popular Tales* (The Echo Library, 2007).

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Translations of all Filipino Songs in this collection were taken from http://rverzola.wordpress.com/things-to-make-and-do.

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GLOSSARY

Adobo a dish of pork and/or chicken cooked in vinegar and soy sauce
Agimat amulet; talisman
Aguho a swamp oak; Polynesian ironwood
Alamid a mountain cat
Alampay a shawl
Albularyo medicine man; a faith healer who uses herbs, prayers, and chants
Alfombra a kind of footwear made of velvet decorated with beautiful beads and sturdy straps
Alimaung a wild dog
Aparador wardrobe; cabinet; a chest of drawers
Aswang in Filipino folklore, it is a generic term for witch, viscera sucker, and shape shifter
Bahay Kubo nipa hut
Balut duck's egg boiled and eaten with salt and vinegar
Banga jar used to store water in
Bangka a small boat
Banyera a big container of fish made of aluminum or wood
barangay a small community; village
Barong Tagalog the national dress shirt worn by Filipino men
Batalan dirty kitchen; a part of a house where the kitchen has been extended
Bathala god of creation (Tagalog Region)
Bibingka a kind of rice cake made from glutinous rice
Bihon rice noodles
Bolo a big, long knife
Burnay an earthen clay pot
Champorado chocolate porridge
Cheongsam a dress for women inspired by the Chinese tradition of slim and sleek fashion
Daing dried fish
Datu a chieftain of a *barangay*
Dayap a lemon; an orange
Diwata fairy
Duhat a berrylike fruit that is black or violet in color
Dwende dwarf
Embarcadero a port for boats and barges
Engkanto fairy; spirits who dwell in land and water formations as well as trees and plants

Galunggong hard tail mackerel; round scad
Gangsa a musical instrument revered by the Igorots and Cordillerans as very precious
Guintud a bamboo receptacle for water
Itak a slim, long knife
Kalamansi jungle lemon; small sour fruits resembling an orange
Kalesa a horse-drawn carriage
Kamote sweet potato
Kataw mermaid
Kawali a deep pan used for cooking
Kohol a snail
Kris a sharp, sword that is curled at the edges
Kura Paroko parish priest
Lambanog coconut wine
Langit at Lupa meaning "Heaven and Earth," which is a game of tag
Lanzones a plant that is cultivated in Southeast America, South Asia, and India
Lapu-lapu a grouper
Lolo grandfather
Luksong Tinik a game played by kids which is a variant of the leapfrog
Mananangal viscera sucker
Maya a brown swallow
Mumbaki a "sayer of prayers"; a religious specialist for the Igorots
Mutya essence
Nuno sa Punso a dwarflike creature living in a mound of soil
Orasyon an assigned time of prayer
Pabitin a game played during fiesta or birthday parties
Paminggalan a cupboard
Panungkit a hook
Parol Christmas lantern
Pit Señor Hail Mister
Pukpok Palayok a game played in fiestas and birthday parties where participants grab for goodies
Rambutan a tree whose fruit has a hairy covering; similar to a *lychee*; *Nephelium lappaceum*
Sikwate hot chocolate made from pure chocolate tablets
Sinigang a soupy dish of pork or fish that is flavored with essence of tamarind
Sinulog from the root word *sulog*, meaning dancing waves
Sitaw string beans
Tablea small round chocolate tablets
Tamaraw a species of the carabao endemic to Mindoro island whose horns form a V shape
Tao human; person
Tapayan any kind of container for liquids
Ubod heart of the coconut or palm
Walis Tambo broom; broomstick

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**Manila Cathedral,
Intramuros, Manila.
Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.**

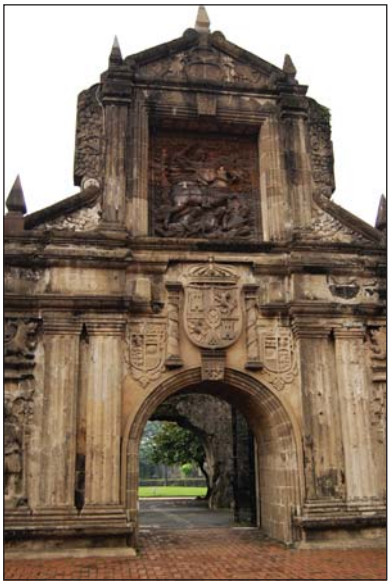
**Quiapo Church,
Quiapo, Manila.
Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.**

Vigan Cathedral, Vigan, Ilocos Sur.

Tricycle or trike (Surigao). A tricycle is a motorbike with an attached passenger cab. They are found in every region of the Philippines.

Kalesa. A kalesa is a horse-drawn carriage, now mostly used for leisure rather than work.

Jeepney. A jeepney is a retro-fitted jeep made to fit multiple passengers. Drivers take pride in their jeepneys through colorful decorations and by giving them names. They are a common mode of transportation. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.



Fort Santiago is a symbol of a Spanish stronghold during the Spanish conquest of the islands. The Rizal Shrine is found in Fort Santiago, which was Rizal's final prison before his execution at Luneta. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

Blood Compact Monument. On March 16, 1565, *Datu* **Sikatuna of Bohol and Miguel Lopez de Legaspi made the historic "Blood Compact" as a sign of friendship and brotherhood between Spain and the natives of Bohol island.**

Hanging coffins. The hanging coffins in Sagada is the Igorots' way of burying their dead. They believe that by securing coffins to the sides of jagged mountain cliffs, their loved ones will be closer to heaven. This practice has been around for 2,000 years. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

Heritage Village. The Heritage Village in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, is an example of a Spanish town built during the 16th century. It was included on the list of world heritage sites in November 1999.

Luneta Park Jose Rizal statue. Jose Rizal is the Philippines' national hero. This monument is located in Luneta Park, Manila. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

Angklung. An angklung is a musical instrument made of bamboo. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

Gong. Gongs are made of brass cymbals and are played during Muslim dances and festivities. Photo by Naomi V. Pitargue.

Crafts. Handicrafts are abundant and include locally made woven bags, hats, and mats.

Tinikling. Tinikling is a folk dance performed by jumping over and in between bamboo poles to the accompaniment of lively music. It is an imitation of the tikling bird who flies from bamboo to bamboo.

Filipiniana. The national dress for women is called *baro't saya*. Barong tagalog is the men's counterpart for this attire. During the celebration of the National Children's Book Day, the members of the Philippine Board on Books for Young People wear traditional Filipiniana attire.

Sari-sari store in the province. Another iconic symbol of the Filipino way of life is the sari-sari store or convenience store. In every nook and cranny of the country, one can find a sari-sari store where anything and everything is sold. In this provincial sari-sari store, fruits and vegetables are sold alongside sundries.

Sari-sari store in the city. In the city sari-sari store, you can find hair pins, toiletries, vegetables, photocopying services, snacks, instant coffee, medicines, comics, magazines, paperback books, and SMS loads for mobile phones. The sari-sari, which means "variety," is very reflective of the smorgasboard attitude of the Filipino.

Kakanin. Hungry? On every corner, you can find sweets and delicacies made from local products such as coconut, rice, sugar, peanuts, and sweet potato.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Nipa hut. This is a typical nipa hut found on many of the provincial islands of the Philippines. It is made of bamboo, reeds, and palm leaves. It is elevated to withstand flooding from the sea.

THE UNUSUAL

Tarsier. The Philippines tarsier is one of the world's smallest primates, native to Bohol, Philippines.